EVOLUTION OF THE KHALSA

VOL. II

THE REFORMATION

BY

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DEDICATED

TO

MY ELDEST BROTHER

RAI BAHADUR PHANIBHUSAN BANERJEE, M.A., B.L.

As token of regard and affection.

INDU

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As token of regard and affection.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The first volume of this work was published in 1936 and I owe an apology to my readers for having taken so much time over the second volume. But the delay has been due to circumstances over which I had no control and even now, when the volume is at last seeing the light of day, I have not been able to bring it out in a form in which I would have liked it to appear. I am particularly sorry that owing to Press difficulties it has not been possible to provide diacritical marks in the body of the work, though, I hope, that the Glossary given in Appendix E would largely make up the deficiency.

I would take this opportunity of acknowledging my heavy indebtedness to my friend and colleague, Dr. A. C. Banerjee, but for whose ungrudging assistance it would have been impossible for me to get the book through the Press under the present trying circumstances. I would also express my thanks to Mr. A. Mukherjee of Messrs A. Mukherjee & Co., who has been uniformly helpful.

INDUBHUSAN BANERJEE

Calcutta, the 20th June, 1947.

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EVOLUTION OF THE KHALSA

CHAPTER I

GURU HARGOBIND AND THE BEGINNING OF ARMED RESISTANCE

I. The Execution of Guru Arjan

It has been said that as a result of the reforms and, more specially, the organisational work carried out by Guru Arjan and his predecessors "a State, peaceful and unobtrusive, had been slowly evolved"[1] and that the Sikh community had come to acquire the position of an *imperium in imperio*, that of a separate polity within the Mughal Empire. The question may very well be raised as to whether the reforms carried out by Guru Arjan and his predecessors could directly be ascribed to political motive, but whatever the original intention might have been it cannot be denied that these reforms considerably prepared the way for the political development that the Sikhs achieved under Guru Arjan's successors. By the year 1604 the Sikhs hsd become a more or less compact community, in command of an efficient and extensive organisation reaching to the corners of the province and even beyond. The well-knit organisation of tbe *Sangats* and the *Masands* not only kept the Sikhs together and in touch with their leader, but also provided them with funds necessary for common purposes and familiarised them with a kind of self-government, however imperfect it might have been. The separation from the *Udasis* and the barring of the door to asceticism had made Sikhism essentially a religion of householders, a religion which aimed at harmonising valid worldly pursuits with a true religious life. The spectacle of a religious teacher at the head of such an extensive organisation and with a body of followers who had been taught that to sacrifice their all for the Guru was the highest and the most meritorious act, and whose sense of brother-

1 Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism* (Second Edition), p. 76.

hood and love for each other transcended all other feelings, could not but disturb the equanimity of the established State and clearly a crisis was coming when a direct conflict would be difficult to aviod.

This crisis was precipitated by what has been called the sole mistake of Guru Arjan's life. Somehow or other, Guru Arjan became implicated in the rebellion of Prince Khusrau and was sentenced to death by the orders of the Emperor Jahangir. The exact nature of the Guru's participation in the Prince's rebellion remains somewhat doubtful but it is clear that it was neither very deep nor extensive. Jahangir writes : "At last when Khusrau passed along this road this insignificant fellow (Arjan) proposed to wait upon him. Khusrau happened to halt at the place where he was, and he came out and did homage to him. He behaved to Khusrau in certain special ways, and made on his forehead a finger-mark in saffron, which the Indians (*Hinduwan*) call qashqa and is considered propitious"[1] On the other hand, Mohsin Fani says that the Guru merely offered prayers for Khusrau,[2] while Macauliffe stated that moved by compassion, the Guru gave the Prince five thousand rupees for the expenses of his proposed flight to Kabul.[3] Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that the Guru had irretrievably compromised himself, and however trivial his so-called participation in the Prince's rebellion might be, the offence could be and was regarded as a very serious one.

The Sikh writers, however, set the matter in a somewhat different light. Some of these are altogether silent about Guru Arjan's complicity in Khusrau's rebellion and attribute the Guru's execution solely to the machinations of Chandu Shah, who had become an implacable enemy of the Guru ever since the latter had refused the matrimonial alliance between Chandu's daughter and his son and thereby "disgraced Chandu in the eyes of the

1 Rogers and Beveridge, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Vol. I. p. 72.
2 Troyer and Shea, *Dabtstan*, Vol. II, p. 272.
3 Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*. Vol. III. p. 85.

people".[1] We are told that even before this final incident Chandu had tried several times to poison the ears of the Emperor against the Guru but the broad-minded Akbar was shrewd enough to see through the designs, particularly as he entertained a very high opinion of the Guru's character and saintliness. Bnt the death of Akbar and the succession of Jahangir opened to Chandu the desired opportunity and at last he triumphed.[2] Other accounts admit the Guru's help to Khusrau but make it appear in a far less prominent light than the plots of Chandu Shah. It is also said that the hands of Chandu were strengthened by the intrigues of Prithia,[3] the eldest brother of Guru Arjan and a bitter enemy of the Guru since his supersession by the latter, as also by the hostility of the Kazis and the Brahmans. There was a regular conspiracy against the Guru and we are told that, besides participation in Khusrau's rebellion, the charges against the Guru also included the allegations that he called himself "True King", that he established a large organisation with the intention of making war upon the Emperor, and that he had compiled a book which blasphemed both the Hindus and the Mussalmans.[4]

Thus it appears that according to Sikh tradition the Guru's so-callec participation in the rebellion of Prince Khusrau was, no doubt, the ostensible pretext for his execution but the real reasons were different. The organisational strength of Sikhism, the Guru's position as the leader of a fairly compact community and the facts that he was called *Sachcha Padshah* by his followers, and that he had compiled a book which did not spare the current perversions of both Hinduism and Islam, were all used to create a prejudice against the Guru and an attempt

1 The public disgrace of Chandu, referred to in the *Sikkhan deRaj Bikhia*, arose, as Narang informs us (*op. cit.*, p. 80, f.n. 1.), out of a mistaken notion of honour that a noble Khatri could not brook to marry his daughter to any one else, after a birdegroom for her had heen once selected.

2 *Sikkhan de Raj di Blkhia*, p. 22, Forster's *Travels*, Vol. I, p. 258.

3 Prithia, however, dicd shortly before Guru Arjan's execution. (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 89).

4 Macauliffe, *ibid.*, pp. 81, 82, 87-90.

seems also to have been made to incite religious bigotry. Curiously enough, this view of the matter receives substantial confirmation from what the Emperor himself says in his *Tuzuk*. Jahangir writes : "In Gobindwal, which is on the river Biyah (Beas), there was a Hindu named Arjun, in the garments of sainthood and sanctity, so much so that he had captured many of the simple-hearted of the Hindus, and even of the ignorant and foolish followers of Islam, by his ways and manners, and they had loudly sounded the drum of his holiness. They called him Guru, and from all sides stupid people crowded to worship and manifest complete faith in him. For three or four generations (of spiritual successors) they had kept this shop warm. Many times it occurred to me to put a stop to this vain affair or to bring him into the assembly of the people of Islam."[1] It is thus clear that even before Guru Arjan had compromised himself by his so-called complicity in the rebellion of Prince Khusrau, Jahangir had been thinking of either forcibly bringing him within the fold of Islam or else to put an end to him and his Sikhism. We are at a loss to understand why in the face of this clear and indisputable evidence Sarkar says that "Guru Arjan merely suffered the customary punishment of a political offender," because, whatever the ostensible pretext might have been, there can be little doubt that Guru Arjan was primarily a victim of religious bigotry. Macauliffe says : "Thus did Guru Arjan for his sanctity, his conversion of the Hindus and Muhammadans, his compilation of the Granth Sahib and his assistance to the grandson of his former benefactor, fall a victim to the bigotry and inhumanity of a Muhammadan emperor."[2] Regard being had to what the Emperor himself writes in his *Tuzuk* we do not think that any reasonable exception can be taken to this view of the matter.

The Emperor writes : "When this (news about Guru Arjan and Khusrau) came to my ears and I clearly understood his folly, I ordered them to produce him and handed over his

1 Rogers and Beveridge, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 72.
2 J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 308.
3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 100.

houses, dwelling-places, and children to Murtaza Khan, and having confiscated his property commanded that he should be put to death."[1] On the other hand, Mohsin Fany says : "The Padshah Nur-ed-din Jahangir called to his court Arjun-mal on account of his having offered prayers for the king's son Khusro, who had rebelled against his father. Khusro having been taken, the king ordered the imprisonment of Arjun-mal, and wanted to extort a large sum of money from him. The Guru was helpless ; they kept him a prisoner in the sandy country of Lahore, until he died of the heat of the sun and of ill-treatment."[2] And again Sikh tradition affirms that when brought before the Emperor, the Guru was asked why he had helped Khusrau. The Guru's reply was that his assistance to the Prince had nothing to do with his opposition to the Emperor. He found Khusrau in a forlorn condition and gave him some money to enable him to cotinue his journey, as it would have been the height of heartlessness and ingratitude on his part if he had failed to show some kindness to the grandson of his former benefactor, the Emperor Akbar. Such a reply naturally failed to satisfy Jahangir, who ordered that the Guru would have to pay a fine of two lacs of rupees and also to erase the hymns in his Granth which were opposed to the Hindu and Mussalman religions.[3] These conditions the Guru refused to comply with and thereupon he was tortured in various ways and ultimately put to death. It will thus be seen that what happened is not wholly clear. The Emperor does not say anything about the huge fine which, both Mohsin Fani and the Sikh chroniclers assert, he wanted to extort from Guru Arjan and the forcible realisation of which appears to have been the purpose with which inhuman tortures were inflicted on the Guru. The Sikh writers say that the celebrated saint Mian Mir interceded on behalf of the Guru[4] and it may well be that the sentence of death was commuted to one of a large fine. But the Guru either could not or would not pay the

1 Rogers and Beveridge. *op. cit.*, Vol. I. pp. 72, 73.
2 *Dabistan*, Vol. I. pp. 72, 73.
3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 91.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

amount. Mohsin Fani says that when this large fine was imposed the Guru was helpless while Sikh tradition affirms that when the Guru's followers made an attempt to collect the amount he stopped them. "Whatever money I have is for the poor, the friendless and the stranger,"[1] said he. Either way, Guru Arjan was compelled to submit to infinite tortures which, in the end, led to his death.

Mohsin Fani says that the Guru died of the heat of the sun and of ill-treatment. This incident occurred in the height of the summer (the Guru having died in June, 1606) and it seems that the terrible Lahore heat came as a handy instrument in the hands of Guru Arjan's torturers. We are told that the Emperor's agents "poured burning sand on the Guru ,seated him in red-hot cauldrons and bathed him in boiling water."[2] Sarkar says that there was nothing exceptional here and that "these were the usual punishments of revenue defaulters of those days."[3] But it appears to us that to call Guru Arjan a revenue defaulter because of his inability or refusal to pay the fine and then justify the tortures inflicted on him on grounds of current usage ignoring all the other circumstances connected with his death, show a perversity of judgment, which can hardly be excused in a historian.

Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that the Sikhs looked upon the matter in a totally different light and, naturally enough, they ascribed the death of their beloved Guru, who was renowned for the saintliness of his character and to whom people had flocked from all quarters for spiritual solace and enlightenment,[4] to the bigotry and cruelty of the Muhammadan

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

A vivid description of the horrible tortures to which the Guru was compelled to submit is given in the *Panth Prakash*, p. 97. The Sikh accounts, however, draw a veil of uncertainty over the last moments of the Guru and "piously assert that, having obtained leave to bathe in the river Ravi, he vanished in the shallow stream, to the fear and wonder of those guarding him." (Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, Garrert's edition, p. 53).

3 J, N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

4 It is said that even the famous Muhammadam saint Mian Mir came on a visit to the Guru. (Rose, *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes* Vol. I, p. 683).

Government. The development of the Sikh community had hitherto proceeded without any interference from the State, which had, on the contrary, helped it in various ways. But now it became evident that the circumstances had changed and that it would no longer be possible to preserve the community without the aid of arms. This is why Trumpp says that "Guru Arjan's death is the great turning-point in the development of the Sikh community, as from that time the struggle commenced that changed the entire character of the reformatory religious movment,"[1] In self-defence the Sikhs took to arms and the State also could not ignore this new development, particularly as the organisational strength of Sikhism and its unified leadership made it a magnet which migth at any time become a rallying point of disaffection. A struggle was thus becoming, more or less, inevitable and it openly broke out under Guru Arjan's son and successor, Guru Hargobind.

II. The Imprisonment of Guru Hargobind

Mohsin Fani says that Guru Arjan was followed by his brother Baratha, but his son Hargobind also made pretensions to the Khalifat (deputyship) and obtained the place of his father.[2] Baratha is evidently a corruption of Prithia, the name of the eldest brother of Guru Arjan, and this is clearly proved by Mohsin Fani's identification of the followers of Baratha with the Mainas, *i. e.* the *Minas*. Ever since his supersession Prithia had been the most unrelenting enemy of Guru Arjan and it is not improbable that he would raise difficulties after his brother's death. But the Sikh accounts state that Prithia had died just at the critical moment when his intrigues against Guru Arjan were about to bear fruit. It may be that Prithia's son Mihrban raised some difficulties about the succession but Hargobind apparently proved too strong for him.

Guru Arjan's last message to his son and successor, Hargobind, is said to have been as follows : "Let him sit fully

1 Trumpp, *Adi Granth*, p. lxxxii.
2 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 273.

armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability." We are told that although the new Guru was at the time a mere boy of eleven, he proceeded forthwith to carry out the injunction of his father. As we have seen, the Emperor, according to the *Tuzuk*, had handed over the dwelling-houses as well as the family of Guru Arjan to Murtaza Khan, but it appears that no restriction was placed on the activities of the new Guru and he was allowed to go, more or less,his own way. The Sikh writers say that one of the first acts of Guru Hargobind was to gather the nucleus of an army around himself. In the very beginning of his pontificate he is reported to have told Bhai Budha : "My endeavour shall be to fulfil thy prophecy. My self shall be a sword-belt, and I shall wear my turban with a royal aigrette."[1] Several warriors came to him for service and very soon a considerable number of Manjha youths enlisted his cause. The Guru soon acquired a body of troops about 500 strong and a proclamation was issued to the *Masands* to the effect that the Guru would be pleased with those who brought him offerings of arms and horses instead of money. "Several men out of employ and without a taste for manual labour flocked to the Guru's standard", and others also gathered around him "who were satisfied with two meals a day and a new uniform every half-year."[2] This sudden change in policy was opposed by the Guru's mother as well as by Bhai Budha, but the Guru silenced them both by saying that it was in fulfilment of Bhai Budha's own prophecy that he was wearing two swords, signifying temporal and spiritual powers. "In the Gurus's house religion and worldly enjoyment shall be combined,"[3] said he. There was necessarily a change in the Guru's habits and we are told that he systematically turned his attention to chase and other warlike occuptions. Animal diet was permitted and even encouraged and "his disciples soon imitated their Guru in these robust practices."

But the Guru was not allowed to continue long in this manner. He was soon called by the Emperor to Delhi and then

1 Macauliffe. *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 2.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior. The reasons for Guru Haragobind's incarceration, as also the way he was released, are not quite clear and the Sikh chronicles have shrouded the incident with a cobweb of myths beneath which it is not easy to penetrate. The story that the Slkhs relate is somewhat as follows : Chandu Shah again came forward with the proposal of marrying his daughter to Guru Haragobind. In his letter to the Guru, Chandu said that he had now forgotten the former enmity and would be glad to have Hargobind as his son-in-law but, at the same time, he did not fail to threaten the Guru that if he did not agree to the proposal he would serve him as he had served his father. The Guru returned the only answer that he could and sternly refused to have anything to do with one whom he regarded as his father's murderer. Chandu was enraged beyond measure and at once began his machinations. He represented to the Emperor that the present Guru had vowed to take revenge on account of his father's execution and that there was danger of an insurrection from his proceedings. It was necessary that he should be closely watched or, better still, summoned to Delhi to be personally admonished by the Emperor. Thereupon Guru Hargobind was called to Delhi. He remained there for some time and had several interviews with the Emperor, but in spite of his best efforts, as well as those of his friends, Jahangir's suspicions could not be allayed. About this time the Emperor had a very severe illness at Agra and sought the advice of an astrologer to consider what would be the most auspicious time for him to sit on his throne after his recovery. Chandu bribed the astrologer who informed the emperor that a severe calamity was hanging upon him and that he could escape it only if some holy man could be sent to the fort of Gwalior to do penance there. Again, at the instigation of Chandu the Emperor's advisers agreed that Hargobind was just the holy man requried and as a result the Guru was sent to the fort of Gwalior.[1]

It can be easily seen that the above account presents more of fable than of history and there can be no doubt that the more

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 8-20. The story is also given with slight variations in Trumpp. *op. cit.*, p. lxxxiii, *Suraj Prakash* and *Gur Bilas*.

probable reasons for the Guru's imprisonment are given in the *Dabistan*. Mohsin Fani says: "He (Hargobind) had many difficulties to contend with. One of them was that he adopted the style of a soldier, wore a sword contrary the custom of his father, maintained a retinue, and began to follow the chase. The Emperor in order to extort from him the balance of the fine which had been imposed on Arjan Mal, sent him to Gwalior."[1] Sikh records unanimously state that from the very beginning of his pontificate the Guru had, in a manner, deserted the path of his predecessors and taken to the policy of armed defence. The feeble and insignificant military preparation of a boy still in his teens might be considered negligible but its possibilites could not be denied, and the Emperor's object appears to have been to extort, if possible, the fine that had been imposed on Guru Arjan and had not been paid, and to secure the orderliness of the Sikhs in general by keeping their Guru as a hostage. At the same time, what the Sikh records say about the intrigues of the enemies of the Guru and his family should not be entirely ignored. As Beni Prasad suggests,[2] the Emperor's own remarks in the *Tuzuk* make it, more or less, clear that even in the more serious matter of Guru Arjan's execution he had been goaded into action by others and it is not at all improbable that these very same men now procured Guru Hargobind's imprisonment. One his way to Kabul and back Jahangir had twice halted at Lahore for some days in 1607 and the beginning of 1608, and it may well be that it was on these occasions that Hargobind's enemies procured the Emperor's audience and made their representations against the young Guru.

Mohsin Fani states that Guru Hargobind had to remain a prisoner in the fort of Gwalior, on scanty rations,[3] for a period

1 We have given Macauliffe's rendering of the passage in question. Troyer's translation is obviously wrong and has led to a good deal of misunderstanding.

2 Beni Prosad, *Jahangir*, p. 150, foot-note.

3 *Dabistan*, Vol. II. p. 274. The Sikh accounts also seem to admit this indirectly. "The Guru took hardly any food—his rations he destributed among the needy prisoners." (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. p. 23).

of twelve years. We have stated elsewhere[1] the reasons for our view that the period of imprisonment must have been much shorter and we have explained why we think that the Guru was probably released near about 1611. Be that as it may, the way as to how the Guru was released is also not very clear. The Sikh writers, most of whom vaguely confine the Guru's imprisonment to a period of only 40 days, state that a pious Sikh named Bhai Jetha "succeeded in soothing the Emperor, who had been troubled with fearful visions" and that as a reward for this, and also as the result of the pleading of Wazir Khan, a Mughal noble, on behalf of the Guru, Jahangir at last called Hargobind to his presence.[2] Mohsin Fani says that during the period of the Guru's confinement in Gwalior many Sikhs used to come there and bow before the walls of the fort, and at last moved by pity, the Emperor ordered the Guru's release.[3] And again, it has also been said that the famous saint Mian Mir, after whom the Lahore cantonment is named, and who was a friend of the Guru's family, interceded on his behalf and secured his release.[4] But whatever the real reason for the Guru's release might have been, it is clear that henceforward there was a complete change in the attitude of the Emperor towards the Guru and his Sikhs. Sikh tradition goes so far as to say that when the Emperor ordered the Guru's release, the captive Rajas who had been in the fort of Gwalior and who had forgotten the pangs of prison in the company of the saintly Guru, bewailed the impending separation so much so that the Guru was at last constrained to inform the Emperor that he did not like to get his freedom, unless the captive Rajas also were set at liberty together with him. Jahangir at first refused but on the Guru's standing security for the Rajas, the request was granted. It was for this reason that Guru Hargobind was given the title of '*Bandi Chhor Baba*'[5]

1 See Appendix A.

2 Macauliffe *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 24-26. Forster says that an officer named Mahobut Khan interceded on behalf of the Guru. (*op. cit.*, p. 259).

3 *Dabistan*, Vol. II. p. 274.

4 Narang, *op. cit.*. p. 83.

5 Macauliffe, *ibid.*, Vol. IV. pp. 26. 27. It may not be improbable that the fact that later in life Guru Hargobind gave asylum to some fugitive

But apart from these legends, it seems that the tables were now completely turned on the Guru's enemies and he had now the desired opportunity of wreaking his vengeance on Chandu Shah, the most implacable among them. We are told that the Emperor was now fully convinced of Chandu's perfidy and handed him over to Guru Hargobind to deal with him as he liked. The Sikh records describe in detail the indignities that were heaped on Chandu and the severe castigation he was made to undergo. "On a signal from the Guru, Bhai Bidhi Chand and Bhai Jetha seized Chandu, took off his turban, tied his hand behind his back, and showered blows of slippers on his devoted head. While being thus castigated he was led through the streets of the city, a warning to all men. He was pelted with stones, mud, and filth, and several people spat on his face.....The Sikhs made him over to pariahs as if he were a dog. Dirt and filth continued to be poured on him, and he was reduced to a condition in which no one could recognise him.' [1] Whatever that might be, the death of Chandu closes a definite epoch in the Guru's life and we enter upon the second phase of his career, when we find him in the role of a friendly collaborator of Jahangir and his Government.

III. Guru Hargobind and the Mughal Government : the Period of Friendly Co-operation.

Mohsin Fani says : Hargobind was always attached to the stirrup of the victorious Jahangir" and "after Jahangir's death Hargobind entered the service of his majesty Shah Jahan, the victorious King."[2] Thus it would appear that since his release from Gwalior till at least the beginning of the reign of Shah Jahan, Guru Hargobind was attached, in some capacity or other, to the Mughal Government. But what exactly his position was it is difficult to say. The more important Sikh records are silent

chiefs and nobles might have had something to do with the origin of the legend.

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 30.
2 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, pp. 273, 274.

about this acceptance of service by Guru Hargobind but two of the later works say that the Guru was appointed a sort of supervisor over the Punjab officials with a command of 700 horse, 1,000 foot, and 7 guns.[1] This, on the face of it, seems absurd and is positively disproved by the almost decisive negative evidence of the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*. In that diary "full accounts of the riots and rebellions, wars and conquests are given, The imperial regulations are reproduced in full. All the important appointments, promotions and dismissals are mentioned. Sketches of the principal nobles and officers are drwan in a life-like manner" and "the Emperor's own life is revealed with candour and frankness."[2] The fact that even the name of Hargobind does not occur in Jahangir's memoirs seems to prove that the Guru could not have been so intimate with the Emperor as the Sikh writers would have us believe, and the position that he held was also certainly a very minor one, which the Emperor did not think worth his while to notice. Mohsin Fani's evidence also points definitely to the same conclusion, for he says that for some time the Guru "attached himself to Yar Khan, the eunuch, who held the office of a Faujdar in the Nawabi of the Punjab, and whom he assisted in the administration."[3] Guru Hargobind's position in the administration was thus definitely a very minor one and for some period at least he had been the mere assistant of a Faujdar.

Yet, on the whole, the relation in which the Guru stood to the Mughal Government since his release from Gwalior till the beginning of the reign of Shah Jahan when open hostilities broke out, is, more or less, obscure and it is not easy to place the facts in an intelligible order or to understand the motives that inspired the Guru. He lived on the whole in peace with the Government and, as we have seen, he also held a minor position in the administration, but besides what Mohsin Fani says about his being associated with the Faujdar Yar Khan for some time, we know

1 *Panth Prakash*, p. 107. *Itihas Guru Khalsa*, p. 128.
2 Beni Prasad, *Jahangir*, p. 454.
3 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 274.

practically nothing else about this aspect of his career. The Sikh writers, no doubt, state that the Guru had become a great friend of the Emperor and had accompained the latter once to Kashmir,[1] and also that he had been given a command against Raja Tarachand of Nalgarh, whom he subdued and brought before the Emperor.[2] But these statments find no independent corroboration, and, considering the loose and irresponsible manner in which details are often woven into their narratives by Sikh chroniclers, it is difficult to accept these statements at their face value. But even if true, these do not improve our position to any appreciable extent and the question of Guru Hargobind's relation to the Government of Jahangir remains, partly at least, in the realm of conjecture.

Though they may or may not have a bearing on the question in hand, several facts, however, come out more or less clearly. The Guru's imprisonment does not seem to have damped his military ardour in any way and there is evidence to show that he continued the same old policy which he had adopted towards the beginning of his pontificate. He was anxious to have, by his side, an army, however small, which he might use for defensive purposes in times of emergency and we are told that the old force was soon revived. Mohsin Fani says: "The Guru had 800 horses in his stable, 300 troopers on horseback

1 In the accounts followed by Macauliffe it is only stated that the Emperor had requested the Guru to accompany him to Kashmir but it does not appear that the Guru complied with the request. The Guru, no doubt, visited Kashmir later on, but that was due to the devotion and attraction of Bhayabhari, the mother of Sewa Das, a Brahman, whom the Guru had converted to Sikhism. (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 31, 60, 61).

2 *Panth Prakash*, p. 107, *Itihas Guru Khalsa*, p. 128. Macauliffe, however, says nothing about this incident. Narang mentions the *Dabistan* as an authority for this statement. Mohsin Fani, however, merely says in another connection that the Guru took refuge at Geraitpur (Kiratpur) "which lies in the mountainous district of the Punjab, and was then dependent on the Raja Tarachand, who had never paid homage to the Badshah, Shah Jahan." (*Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 276). Narang's confusion is perhaps due to the fact that both the chiefs are named Tarachand but Kiratpur was situated within the territories of the hill chief of Kahlur and so the two Rajas could not be identical.

and 60 men with fire-arms were always in his service."[1] This force, as Cunningham suggests,[2] possibly served as the Guru's body-guard and secured the safety of his person. Besides, the Guru is said to have enlisted many malcontents and fugitives among his followers and to have taken many dacoits and free-booters into service. This seems to be confirmed by Mohsin Fani's statement that "whoever was a fugitive from his home took refuge with him."[3] Guru Haragobind also enlisted bands of Pathan mercenaries, and a Pathan chief named Painda Khan became one of his most able and trusted adherents.[4] In fact, Guru Hargobind's open struggle with the Mughal authorities during the early years of the reign of Shah Jahan clearly shows that he had at his back some solid military strength, however insignificant it might have been when compared with the mighty resources of the Mughal Empire.

In the second place, we find that during the period in question the Guru often lived away from Amritsar and the Sikh records often speak of the anxiety and concern that the Guru's people there felt for him. Indeed, there is evidence to show that the Guru had been leading, more or less, a wandering life and this, together with his other innovations, led to a good deal of misunderstanding. Apparently the Sikhs of the old school did not like the Guru's innovations and thought that "he was too much occupied with Mahomedans and military exercises." The Guru often used to distribute the offering made to him by the Sikhs to his Muhammdan followers. Painda Khan in particular was pampered in every way. This the Sikhs could not appreciate and it was ultimately decided that a deputation consisting of some notable Sikhs should wait upon Bhai Gurdas, who had very great influence with the Guru, and ask him to remonstrate with Hargobind on his general conduct. It is said that it was on this occasion that Bhai Gurdas composed the significant *pauri* that

1 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 277.
2 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
3 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 277.
4 Macauliffe. *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. pp. 52, 76.

occurs in his 26th *Var*. The story of the deputation may or may not be true and the *pauri* itself might have led to its invention, particularly as such instances are not rare in Sikh literature,[1] but the evidence of the verses themselves is incontestable. There is clear internal evidence which proves that the *pauri* was composed after the release of the Guru from Gwalior, and as Bhai Gurdas died in 1629, it is evident that it was written during the particular period of Guru Hargobind's life which we have been now discussing. The importance of the *pauri* in question cannot be gainsaid, as Bhai Gurdas was a contemporary and a very ardent admirer of the Gurus, and we make no apology for quoting it in full. It runs :

"People say the former Gurus used to sit in the temple ; the present Guru remaineth not in any one place.

The former Emperors used to visit the former Gurus ; the present Guru was sent into the fortress by the Emperor.

In former times the Guru's darbar could not contain the sect ; the present Guru leadeth a roving life and feareth nobody.

The former Gurus, sitting on their thrones, used to console the Sikhs ; the present Guru keepeth dogs and hunteth.

Tho former Gurus used to compose hymns, listen to them, and sing them ; the present Guru composeth not hymns, not listeneth to them, nor singeth them.

He keepeth not his Sikh followers with him, but taketh enemies of his faith and wicked persons as his guides and familiars.

I say, the truth within him cannot possibly be concealed, the true Sikhs, like the bumble-bees, are enamoured of his lotus feet.

He supporteth a burden intolerable to others and asserteth not himself."[2]

It is to be noticed that in the last two verses Bhai Gurdas does not dispute the apparent truth of the people's allegations, but merely expresses his firm belief that the Guru's motive will soon become clear and then every body will learn to appreciate

1 See Vol. I of this Work, pp. 56, 57.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol, IV, pp. 76, 77.

his actions. That the Guru's innovations had been causing misgivings and that his actions were not always appreciated by his contemporaries are also shown by two anecdotes about Pertabmal narrated by Mohsin Fani.[1] There can thus be little doubt that Sikhism was undergoing a transformation in the hands of Guru Hargobind and that it was causing apprehensions all round.

Trumpp says: "As the Guru's expeditions were nearly always directed against the Mahomedans and the extortionate provincial authorities, we need not wonder that his popularity fast increased with the ill-treated Hindu rural population; every fugitive or oppressed man took refuge in his camp, where he was sure to be welcomed without being much troubled about religion, and the charms of a vagrant life and the hope of booty attracted numbers of warliko Jats, who willingly acknowledged him as their Guru, the more so as he allowed his followers to eat all kinds of flesh, that of the cow excepted."[2] It has already been seen that Guru Hargobind admitted even robbers and freebooters into his service and that fugitives and malcontents gathered round his standard. And considering the traditional warlike and marauding instincts of the Jats, who by this time already formed the backbone of the Sikh community, it may perhaps also be true that the hope of booty and of adventure had attracted a good many of them far more than any higher religious motive. But we do not know on what grounds Trumpp says that the Guru led expeditions against the Muhammadans and the extortionate provincial authorities and that this made him highly popular among the rural Hindu population. As will appear later, the Guru's military actions were mostly of a defensive nature and in almost all cases, he did not lead expeditions; rather expeditions were led against him. He had sense enough to perceive that in a conflict with the Mughals he could have no chance, but at the same time, he was no longer content to remain at the absolute mercy of the Government, helpless to resist when resistance was the only alternative to disgrace and ruin. This

1 *Dabistan*, Vol. II. pp. 112, 113. These anecdotes may be found also in Volume I of this Work, p. 269.

2 Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxiv.

it is important to remember, for otherwise we are likely to misunderstand completely the Guru's policy and career.

Indeed, the only expedition, besides that against the Raja of Nalgarh already referred to, which, according to the Sikh records took place during the period we have been discussing, was that to Nanakmata, a very tame affair after all, and hardly to be counted among the military exploits of Guru Hargobind. We are told that an *Udasi* named Almast complained to Guru Hargobind that "he had been expelled from his shrine by the *Jogis* who had also burnt the *pipal* tree under which Guru Nanak had held debate with the followers of Gorakh Nath." The Guru had no difficulty in rescuing the shrine and putting Almast in possession of it. The Guru remained there for some time and "busied himself with the organisation of a methodical Sikh service under the guidance of Almast." Since then "the place has borne the undisturbed name of Nanakmata, and remained in the possession of *Udasi* Sikhs."[1]

Trivial though this incident may appear in the history of the adventures of Guru Hargobind, it is important in another way. There is evidence to show that near about this time Sikh activities were spreading outside the Punjab and sometimes even to far-off places and the Sikh organisation also had perforce to be widened. Under Guru Hargobind and his successors the system of *Sangats* and *Masands* was supplemented by several *Dhuans* (hearths) and *Bakshishes* (bounties) and in these institutions the *Udasis* were often made to play a prominent part. It is important to remember that the *Udasis* always lived

1 Macauliffe, *op- cit.*, Vol. IV, pp, 50-54. It is said that "this or another Almast had been deputed by this, the sixth Guru, to Shujatpur near Dacca and had there founded a *sangat*. This *sangant* at Shujatpur was called after Natha Sahib, third in succession to this Almast." It is significant that "the inscription on a stone of the well of this *sangat* commemorates the name of the original founder and his 'Mother Lodge' of Nanakmata. This new *sangat* was not named Nanakmata, but it was under the Lodge at Nanakmata in Naini Tal, and its priests were appointed or removed by the head at that place' (Gurbux Singh, *Sikh Relics in Eastern Bengal*", *Dacca Review*, 1916, p. 228). This throws a clear light on the extension of Sikh organisational work about this time.

2 Teja Singh, *Sikhism. Its Ideals and Institutions*, pp. 72, 73.

in friendly co-operation with the Sikhs and, besides celibacy and asceticism, their tenets were, in all fundamentals, the same as those of Sikhism. Further, we are told that Baba Sri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak and the founder of the *Udasi* order, adopted, prior to his death in 1629, Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of Guru Hargobind, and "in token of adoption and succession to him, put on Gurditta's head a Persian hat, and on his neck a string of lotus seeds."[1] The orders thus came closer together and the *Udasis,* who had no families to look after and were therefore more at liberty to undertake responsibilities in difficult and out-of-the-way places, were unreservedly utilised by Guru Hargobind and his successors in spreading the message of Sikhism and broadening its organisation.

Be that as it may, it appears that the Guru succeeded in living at peace with the Government and, more or less, in friendly co-operation with it till the end of the reign of Jahangir. But the Guru's position was an extremely difficult one, and now and then incidents happened which well-nigh embroiled him in a quarrel with the authorities. One such was the incident of Kaulan, the daughter of the Kazi of Lahore, or as some say, his concubine.[2] The Guru and the Kazi were already on bad terms when the incident further embittered the position. We are told that a beautiful horse that was being brought from Kabul by a Sikh *masand* named Sujan was forcibly captured by an imperial officer, who duly presented it to the Emperor. Jahangir, in his turn, presented the horse to the Kazi of Lahore, but the Guru forcibly recovered it and in addition, Kaulan left the Kazi's house and took asylum under the Guru at Amritsar. The Sikh

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 130.

2 The Sikhs unanimously state that she was daughter of the Kazi, whereas the *Tarikh-i-Punjab* states that she was merely a maid-servant. There may be something in what Narang says about the girl: "Muhammadans, according to Cunningham, assert that she was a concubine, and the Hindi name of the girl, Kaulan (lotus), would confirm the Moslem view. The girl might have been a Hindu and might have been forcibly abducted by the Kazi, by no means an uncommon occurrence in those days. Thinking the Guru to be a champion of the Hindus, she might have escaped and taken refuge with him." (Narang. *op. cit.*, pp. 107, 108. foot-note.)

chroniclers state that this Kaulan was the daughter of the Kazi of Lahore. From her very childhood she had been of a religious disposition and had become a disciple of the saint Mian Mir. Her father did not like all this, and when, even on attaining puberty, the girl refused to marry, the Kazi lost all patience and began to illtreat her. Thereupon Kaulan took counsel with Mian Mir, who advised her to seek the protection of the Guru, and the result was that Kaulan stealthily left her father's place and took refuge with Guru Hargobind at Amritsar. The Kazi was highly incensed and represented the matter to the Emperor as an abduction and also reiterated his other grievance against the Guru on the score of the horse. But Jahangir refused to interfere and there the matter apparently ended.[1] The Emperor's decision might have been, to a great extent, influenced by the fact that Mian Mir was somehow involved in this affair, for Jahangir entertained the very highest respect for that saint. Off and on, the Sikh records state that Mian Mir had been a very great friend of the Guru's family and it may not be improbable that the influence of his name considerably helped Guru Hargobind in maintaining his friendly relations with the Mughal Government during the reign of Jahangir.

IV. Guru Hargobind and the Mughal Government : the Period of Open Hostilities

With the death of Jahangir we enter upon a new epoch in the career of Guru Hargobind. Mohsin Fani, no doubt, states that even after the accession of Shah Jahan the Guru continued in the employ of the Mughal Government, but it appears that the position had very soon to be abandoned. Whatever the immediate reason might be, it is clear that the policy that the Guru had been pursuing was bound, sooner or later, to bring him into collision with the Government and it speaks a good deal for his ability and political skill that he succeeded in avoiding the conflict so long. That the Guru was becoming a potential source of danger to the established order and a rallying

1 Macauliffe. *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. pp. 43-49.

point of disaffection is clearly shown by his alleged recruitment of malcontents and fugitives from justice and the asylum that he extended to disaffected chiefs.[1] Besides his own regular followers, he had, as we have seen, also enlisted bands of Pathan mercenaries, and the free-booters and dacoits that had entered freely into his ranks made him the centre of a turbulent and dangerous crowd. And it should not be forgotten that behind all this was a, more or less, compact organisation and religious ideals of a highly intense fervour. Thus the situation which had arisen towards the close of Guru Arjan's pontificate and which we have already discussed, was aggravated further, and though it might seem that compared with the mighty resources of the Mughal Empire all this was insignificant and hardly worthy of serious notice, its potentiality could not be denied. It was primarily the Guru's acceptance of office under the Government which enabled him to get on peacefully so long, for it had the direct result of legalising his irregularities to some extent, and of disarming the suspicions of the local authorities.

However, this position could no longer be maintained and very soon after Shah Jahan's accession open quarrel broke out. It so happened that one day when Shah Jahan had gone out hunting near Amritsar, the Guru also was similarly occupied. The Guru's followers and the servants of the imperial hunt quarrelled about a bird, and finally the imperialists were driven out with slaughter. This was too great an offence to be lightly passed over, and "the enemies of the Guru thought it a good opportunity to revive the charges against him, and to remind the Emperor of his alleged misdeeds." An expedition under Mukhlis Khan was sent against Guru Hargobind, and a battle was fought in and around Amritsar. The Sikhs describe the

1 It is said that Ram Pratap, the fugitive Raja of Jaisalmer, took refuge with Hargobind and that Yar Khan and Khwaja Sarai, dismissed commander of the Mughal army, entered the Guru's asylum. (Narang *op. cit.*, p. 106, foot-note 1). We are further told that two Pathan nobles, named Anwar and Hasan Khan, left the service of the Government and took refuge with Hargobind. *(Tawarikh Guru Khalsa.* See also Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. p. 100).

battle in great detail[1] and unanimously affirm that the Guru came out completely victorious. Mohsin Fani, however, says: "At Ramdaspur (Amritsar) Hargobind sustained an attack of the army, which Saha Jahan, the shadow of God, sent against him, and the Guru's property was then plundered."[2] It seems that the Sikh accounts also corroborate Mohsin Fani, though in a curious way. It is stated that the Sikh detachment of Lohgarh (something of a fortress outside the city) was too small to cope with the invaders. The Muhammadans made short work of them and took possession of the Guru's palace. As the coming day had been fixed for the marriage of the Guru's daughter, Viro, sweets had been stored in the house for the marriage feast. The Muhammadans "gorged themselves to repletion" and "surfeited by the Gure's sweets" could not help sleeping, when they were surprised by the Guru's men and entirely routed, Mukhlis Khan himself being killed in the fray.[3] It is needless to discuss the merits of this story. Suffice it to say that clearly the Guru's house was plundered by the Muhammadans on this occasion and that his so-called victory could not prevent his hasty retreat from Amritsar. Mohsin Fani says that the Guru fled to Kartarpur,[4] and the Sikh accounts also bear him out.[5]

It does not seem that Guru Hargobind remained long at Kartarpur, which was situated in the Jalandhar Doab between the Ravi and the Beas. He continued his journey, crossed the Beas and "pitched his camp on the tumulus of an ancient village". The Guru decided that this was a very suitable site for the foundation of a city, and ordered that the foundation should be laid out immediately and the whole work completed without delay. The people of the locality, we are told, received the Guru in a friendly manner but the landlord and chaudhuri of the place, a Khatri of the Gherar tribe named Bhagwan Das, created

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. pp. 82-93. *Gur Bilas* (published by Gulab Singh and Sons), pp. 271-291. *Panth Prakash*. pp. 113, 114.

2 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 275.

3 Macauliffe, *ibid*, p. 84. *Panth Prakash*, p. 113.

4 *Dabistan*; Vol. II. p. 275.

5 Macauliffe, *ibid.*, p. 96. *Panth Prakash*, p. 114.

difficulties which ended in a fray in which the landlord lost his life. His son Ratan Chand allied himself with Karm Chand, the son of Chandu Shah, and complained to the Subahdar of Jalandhar, who sent a small army against the Guru. Hargobind, however, succeeded in beating it back, and the establishment of Sri Hargobindpur, as the place came to be called, then proceeded without any further disturbance.[1]

After this the Guru appears to have remained in peace for some time but his fondness for horses and the almost incurable habit of the officials to seize these whenever one of a good breed and fleetness could be found,[2] again involved him in conflict with the Government. It is said that two *masands* named Bakht Mal and Tara Chand were bringing two horses "of surpassing beauty and fleetness" for the Guru, but these again were seized by the Emperor's officials. An ardent follower of the Guru, named Bidhi Chand, who had formerly been a notorious highwayman and robber, succeeded in recovering the horses from the Emperor's stable at Lahore. Thereupon an army was sent against the Guru. Hargobid thought it prudent "to seek shelter in some advantageous position" and he is said to have retired to the wastes of Bhatinda south of the Sutlej, where it might be useless or dangerous to follow him. There, near the village of Lahira, another battle was fought and this time also the imperialists were beaten back. This is said to have happened in 1631.

Mohsin Fani does not make any clear reference to the two actions described above. But he says that before and after the battle of Kartarpur, the last of Guru Hargobind's battles against the Mughal Government, "he encountered great dangers of war." As the battle of Amritsar is definitely referred to, it seems that in the meantime, *i. e.*, between the first battle, that of Amritsar, and the last battle, that of Kartarpur, the Guru had to engage

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 102-119. *Panth Prakash*, p. 115. See also Maculiffe's foot-note on p. 104.

2 Besides the instances given in the Sikh records we have one from Mohsin Fani as well, We are told that Sadah, a devoted Sikh, bought three capital horses of Irak for the Guru but they were seized by a tyrant named Khalil Beg (*Dabistan*, Vol. II. p. 284).

in some other minor actions. And the remark, "with the aid of God he escaped unhurt, though he lost his property,"[1] seems to indicate that he did not meet with decisive reverses. Mohsin Fani's remark, however, may as well refer to the personal safety of Guru Hargobind, but, nevertheless, it is to be noticed that the Guru's last battle was fought at Kartarpur, and therefore it is clear that after the battle of Lahira, Hargobind found himself strong enough to leave his retreat and return to the plains. Thus it seems that in spite of what Mohsin Fani says, the Sikh claim of a victory at Lahira cannot be entirely discounted. We are told that the Guru had taken up a very advantageous position. "The Guru's army was so disposed round the only tank in the area that when the enemy arrived they could not obtain access to its water, and thus must inevitably perish from thirst."[2] It appears that the imperialists could not cope with the natural dfficulties of the situation and Hargobind had not much difficulty in beating them back.

After this the Guru watched his opportunity and soon returned to Kartarpur. He appears to have lived for some time in peace, but troubles again commenced through the defection of Painda Khan. Who this Painda Khan was, is not wholly clear. On the authority of some Sikh accounts Cunningham states : "The mother of one Painda Khan, who had subsequently risen to some local eminence, had been the nurse of Hargobind, and the Guru had ever been liberal to his foster-brother."[3] From Macauliffe's account it simply appears that Painda Khan was a Pathan mercenary,[4] who entered the Guru's service and rose high in his favour. He had led the Guru's army in the battle of Amritsar, and it was chiefly to his valour and ability that Hargobind's success was due. Mohsin Fani merely states that he was the son of Fattah Khan Ganaida,[5] while Irvine makes him an imperial commander.[6] Irvine was perhaps led to this belief

1 *Dabistan*, Vol. II. p. 275.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 179. *Panth Prakash*, p. 117.
3 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
4 Macauliffe, *ibid.*, p. 54.
5 *Dabistan*. Vol. II, p. 275.
6 Irvine. *Later Mughals*. Vol. I, p. 77.

by the fact that Painda Khan commanded the troops against Hargobind at the time of the battle of Kartarpur. However, this Painda Khan is said to have quarrelled with the Guru about a hawk.[1] and joined the imperialists. Another expedition was now sent against the Guru under the leadership of Painda Khan, and it is stated that the imperialists were again totally defeated and Painda Khan himself was slain.[2] Mohsin Fani also seems to corroborate the Siks chroniclers, because he, too, says that on this occasion Mir Baderah and Painda Khan found their death.[3] We do not know who this Mir Baderah was ; most probably he was an imperial officer who had accompanied the expediton, but there can be no doubt that Mohsin Fani's Painda Khan is identical with the man whom we have been discussing

The rest of the Guru's adventures is soon told. Mohsin Fani says : "At last Hargobind retired from the war at Kartarpur to Bhagwarh and because, there, in the vicinity of Lahore, he met with difficulties, he betook himself thence in haste to Geraitpur which lies in the mountainous district of the Punjab."[4] The Sikh records also state that after the battle of Kartarpur, which is said to have taken place in 1634, the Guru left the place and in the course of the journey reached Phagwarh. "As the town was on the road to Lahore whence reinforcemets could esaily be sent against him, he continued his march to Kiratpur."[5] It is easily understandable that with his slender resources it was not possible for the Guru to maintain an attitude of open defiance

1 Cunningham,*op. cit.*, p. 58. The Sikh records make the issue a bit wider. A Sikh named Chitra Sain presented a horse, a hawk, a dress and some military weapons to the Guru, who gave the hawk to his son Gurditta and the rest to Painda Khan. But Asman Khan, the son-in-law of Painda Khan, took possession of these with the assistance of his mother-in-law and in addition stole Gurditta's hawk. When asked about the hawk, Painda Khan denied that it was in his house and the Guru drove him out. (Macauliffe, *op., cit.*, Vol. IV. pp. 90-193. *Panth Prakash*, p. 118. See Narang, *op. cit.*. p. 111. foot-note 2).

2 Macauliffe, *ibid.*, pp. 189-212. *Panth Prakash*, pp. 18-19.

3 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 275.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Macauliffe, *ibid.*, p. 213. *Panth Prakash*, p. 119.

any longer and so, even though he came out victorious at Kartarpur, he thought it prudent to take refuge in the hill retreat.

Thus ends the story of Guru Hargobind's quarrels with the Mughal Government. Forster says : The vein of incongruous story which runs through the achievements of this militant priest precludes the derivation of any historical use".[1] This is no doubt true if the Sikh accounts are taken by themselves but, fortunately for us, the account given in the *Dabistan*, scrappy though it is, enables us to check the Sikh records, and, as we have seen above the two agree on many important points and almost entirely with regard to the general sequence of events. The attempt of the Sikh writers to give an exaggerated importance to the exploits of their Guru cannot possibly mislead us, for it is certain that Hargobind's adventures were, after all, what Irvine calls "a petty revolt"[2]; otherwise they must have been noticed by contemporary Muhammadan writers.

V. Guru Hargobind in Retirement

For the rest of his life till his death in 1645 Guru Hargobind appears to have lived in peace at Kiratpur. The place was situated at the base of the Kahlur mountain and we are told that the town had been founded by Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of Hargobind. The place, it appears, had once been visited by Guru Nanak, where he met Budhan Shah, a Muslim saint, who was still living there when Baba Gurditta founded the town according to the instructions of his father. The place was named Kiratpur because "God's praises *(Kirat)* were ever to be sung there."[3] Guru Hargobind now made it his permanent residence and he seems to have eagerly availed himself of the peace and tranquillity that the retreat offered and which he so much needed after the trials and anxieties of his previous adventures.

We do not know much of Hargobind's life at Kiratpur.

1 Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

2 Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 77.

3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. pp. 140-142.

This much, however, seems clear that the policy of armed resistance had perforce to be abandoned for the time being[1] and the Guru engaged himself in peaceful activities. Hitherto, he had not had much time to devote to the very important work of propaganda and organisation and it appears that Baba Gurditta had been entrusted with this part of the Guru's responsibilities. The Guru, however, had now leisure enough to look to these matters and it is said that under Hargobind's direction Gurditta, in 1636, appointed four preachers, Phul, Almast, Gonda and Balu *Hasna*, who founded the *Dhuans* or hearths[2] and spread the message of Sikhism far and wide. It is also claimed by the Sikhs that the Guru acquired a great influence over the Hill Rajas, many of whom are said to have been converted to Sikhism. The Sikh chroniclers state that in the days of Guru Amar Das the Raja of Haripur had accepted Sikhism,[3] and that the Hill Rajas of Kulu, Suket, Haripur and Chamba visited Guru Arjan and became his followers as the Raja of Mandi had previously done.[4] Guru Hargobind is said to have converted the Rajas of Kangra and Pilibit,[5] so that when he retired to Kiratpur, Sikhism had already become a powerful influence in the hill tracts. Now, the appearance of the Guru in person and his continued residence at Kiratpur must have strengthened the hold of Sikhism much further and this is testified to by the author of the *Dabistan*. In this connection, Mohsin Fani narrates a very interesting story. The inhabitants of the country of Raja Tarachand worshipped idols, and on the summit of a fortified mountain they had raised an image of Narayana, whither Rajas and other eminent persons made pilgrimages. When Guru Hargobind went to that place, a Sikh named Bhairo entered the temple and struck off the nose of the

1 Khazan Singh, however, says that even after his retirement to Kiratpur the Guru, at least on one occasion, engaged himself in military adventure. It is said that in 1642 the Guru joined forces with Raja Tarachand and helped him to defeat the Nawab of Rupar (*History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, Vol. I. p. 139).

2 Teja Singh, *op. cit.*. p. 72.
3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 62.
4 Macauliffe, *ibid.*, Vol. III. p. 70.
5 *Panth Prakash*.

idol. The Rajas complained to the Guru, but Bhairo denied the charge. The servants of the Rajas, however, declared that they positively knew the man. Bhairo replied : "O Rajas, ask you the god : if he tells my name, kill me." The Rajas said : "You blockhead ! how shall the god speak ?" Bhairo laughed and answered : "Now it is clear who is the blockhead : if the god cannot defend his head nor point out the man who struck him, what benefit do you expect from him, and why do you venerate his strength ?" Bhiaro's answer is said to have had a tremendous influence and Mohsin Fani says that "from this time the disciples of the Guru increased considerably, and in this mountainous country, as far as the frontiers of Thibet and Khota, the name of Musalman was not heard."[1] Subsequent events, however, give us a wholly different picture. They clearly show that Sikhism had never succeeded in making much headway in the hills and that the Hill Rajas remained to the last the most implacable enemies of Guru Gobind Singh and his cause. The Kangra Hills have always been the greatest stronghold of Hinduism, and throughout this tract the ascendancy of a type of Rajput society is well-marked. Political privilege, social exclusiveness, and tribal pride, all combined to induce the Hill Rajas to present a united front against Sikhism, and Guru Gobind Singh's mission in the hills proved, more or less, a conspicuous failure. It is thus evident that even if there had been a movement in favour of Sikhism during the days of Guru Hargobind, it was only temporary. However, the Guru apparently lived in friendly relations with the Hill Rajas, and that he had gained a considerable reputation is proved by the fact that Perah Kaivan, Yazadanian, was moved by the name of the Guru and came to pay him a visit.[2]

But it seems that because of domestic difficulties and sorrows this part of the Guru's life was not as peaceful and tranquil as it otherwise might have been. The Sikh records unanimously describe Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of Guru

1 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 276.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 280.

Hargobind, as a person of a saintly disposition and as in every way qualified to be the coming leader of Sikhism. We have seen that he had been entrusted with the very important work of organisation and propaganda and there can be no doubt that he was giving a very good account of himself. Unfortunately, Gurditta came to differences with his father about marrying the daughter of a Sikh named Naghura but he had sense enough not to persist when his father definitely cursed the contemplated union.[1] Next, he is said to have displeased his father by his attempt to exhibit miraculous power, a proceeding which the Sikh Gurus always looked down upon with horror and contempt.[2] At the top of all these came Gurditta's untimely death in 1638 and this must have been a very great blow to the Guru, the more so as Guraditta's eldest son, Dhir Mal, took up an attitude hostile to his grandfather. The Sikh records tell us that when the Guru left for Kiratpur, this Dhir Mal, with his mother Nathi, remained behind at Kartarpur and took possession of the Guru's property there, as also of the priceless original copy of the *Granth Sahib*. He had been asked several times to hand over the sacred volume to the Guru but, under one pretext or another, he kept the book with himself and systematically refused the Guru's invitations to come to Kiratpur. When Gurditta died the Guru asked for the holy volume in order to recite it for the respose of his dead son's soul, and further invited Dhir Mal to come over to Kiratpur in order to receive a turban at the Guru's hands in token of his succession to his father's status and property but we are told that Dhir Mal was already in concourse with the Guru's enemies and turned a deaf ear to all his proposals. At last, persuaded by the importunities of his mother, Dhir Mal is said to have made a visit to Kiratpur but by his haughtiness and arrogance he soon made the place too hot for him and returned to Kartarpur.[3] He seems too have been under the delusion that, as he was in possession of the *Granth*, "which was the outward and tangible sign of Guruship," he would not have

1 *Dabistan*, Vol. II. pp. 281, 282.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. pp. 220, 221.
3 *Ibid*, pp. 221, 222, 230-32.

much difficulty in gaining the *gaddi* in the end, whomsover Guru Hargobind might nominate as his successor.

This conduct of Dhir Mal must have greatly embittered the last days of the Guru and he also must have felt deeply the loss of relations and friends. One of his sons, Atal Rai, had died young while the Guru was still at Amritsar and next came the death of Damodari, his first wife, in 1631. Baba Gurditta, as we have seen, died in 1638 and some years later Marwahi, the Guru's second wife, followed. Of the men who had served the Guru unflinchingly through all his trials and tribulations, several were already dead, notably Jit Mal and Bidhi Chand The Guru now felt that his end also was drawing near and he proceeded to make arrangements for the succession. It is said that some Sikhs pressed upon him that he should appoint Suraj Mal, his second son, as his successor but the Guru said : "The Gurushipis a heavy burden. Only the worthy can support it. The aspirant to it may know how to prophesy, but should keep his secrets to himself. Though he sees offences he should forgive them. He should assist his Sikhs in their time of tribulation and give servants the reward of their services. Deeming the things of this world perishable, he should not covet them. Only he who possesseth these virtues is worthy to be a Guru."[1] Suraj Mal was undoubtedly a highly worthy person in all respects but still, in the Guru's opinion, he did not come up to this high and exacting ideal. His choice fell on Har Rai, the second son of Baba Gurditta, and duly nominating him as the successor, Guru Hargobind departed to the other world. This is said to have happened, according to Mohsin Fani, in 1645.[2]

1 Macauliffe, *op., cit,*. Vol, IV. p. 227.

2 *Dabistan,* Vol. II. p. 280. Some Sikh records state that Guru Hargobind died in 1638. (*Sikhan de Raj di Bikhia,* for instance ; see Court's translation p. 27). Cunningham says : ".....the manuscript accounts consulted place the Gunu's death variously in A.D. 1637, 1638 and 1639 ; but they lean to the middle term." Cunningham, *op. cit.,* p. 59, foot-note). Apparently on the authority of these records Trumpp places the Guru's death in 1638 and suggests that there must be some mistake in the Arabic ciphers of the *Dabistan.* But the *Dabistan* is corroborated by the *Panth Prakash* and the records followed by Macauliffe, as also by one of the manuscripts discovered by Gurbux Singh at Dacca.

VI. Guru Hargobind—the Man and the Leader

Guru Hargobind appears to have been a misunderstood man. While, no doubt, credit is given to him for having inaugurated a policy which was to lead slowly and assuredly to political and military advancement, and which for ever prevented the possibility of the disciples "relapsing into the limited merit or utility of monks and mendicants",[1] it is sometimes hinted that in other respects he fell short of the high ideals that had guided his predecessors. The point is mentioned against him that he did not compose a single line of verse,[2] whereas the *Granth Sahib* remains for ever the living embodiment of the achievements of his predecessor in this respect. Indeed, it appears that many among his contemporaries came to think that the lure of politics and the glamour of arms were leading him away from the true path of a religious and spiritual leader. The observations of Pertabmal,[3] who hinted that under the guidance of Guru Hargobind the Sikhs were degenerating into so many buffoons, have already been referred to, as also the misapprehensions of the Sikhs of the old school recorded by Bhai Gurdas. But it appears to us that the Bhai hits the nail on the head when he says :

> "The truth within him cannot possibly be concealed ;.....
> He supporteth a burden intolerable to others and asserteth not himself."

Looked at superficially, the Guru's activities might seem inconsistent or even grotesque, but a true appreciation of the objective situation was bound to reveal what a clever and well-

(*Dacca Review*, 1961, p. 378). Further, Mohsin Fani states that he himself saw the Guru in 1643. Trumpp's surmise, therefore, cannot be correct.

1 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

2 Trumpp, *op, cit,*, lxxxv.

3 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 113 . This Pertabmal appears to have been a very interesting man, if the anecdotes narrated by Mohsin Fani are to be believed. Of him Mohsin Fani writes: "Pertabmal Chadah (Chadah is a tribe or Kshatriyas) is a Jnani. that is a pious man ; his native country is Sialkut ; he attained to perfection in the exercise of virtue ; he is not confined to any faith or religion, but knows that every religion is a road leading towards God ; he sees in every face a friend revealed."

conceived part he had been playing in exceptionally difficult circumstances.

Both externally and internally the situation was changing and the policy of the Guru had perforce to be adjusted to the new environment. The organisational development of Sikhism had mostly taken place during the tolerant days of Akbar who had never interfered with it; he had, on the contrary, even helped the Gurus in various ways. But the execution of Guru Arjan and Hargobind's own imprisonment definitely showed that sterner days were ahead and that the old policy of mere peaceful organisation no longer sufficed. The policy of wide toleration that Akbar had initiated was gradually modified by his successors till, at last, in the hands of Aurangzib it was given a complete go by. Guru Arjan had foreseen and Guru Hargobind also clearly saw that it would no longer be possible to protect the Sikh community and its organisation without the aid of arms, and the way in which he proceeded to secure this end speaks a good deal for his sagacity and his shrewd political sense. It seems to us that Hargobind's acceptance of office under Jahangir was a fine stroke of policy as it greatly disarmed the suspicions of the local authorities. His connection with the Government served him as a cloak and he succeeded in maturing his plans without any interference from the authorities. It should not be forgotten that any open defiance was entirely out of the question and could only lead to utter ruin. The only alternative was what the Guru followed. He lived in the friendliest of terms with the Government and organised his defensive resources under the cover of that friendship. The Guru gathered an army, enlisted Pathan mercenaries and encouraged malcontents before the very eyes of the local officials. Trumpp says that the authorities "were either too short-sighted or indolent or too powerless to stop effectually the concourse of such a turbulent and dangerous crowd,"[1] but the truth seems to be that the Guru proved too clever for them.

It may also be true that the influence of the saint Mian Mir proved, as we have already suggested, a potent factor in smooth-

1 Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxiv.

ing over the rough patches in the Guru's dealings with the Emperor. Moreover it seems that in a centralised despotism like the Mughal Government a good deal of local irregularities might be excused through the intercession of a powerful advocate in the imperial Court. The point of having an advocate at Court was regarded as so important that even a new viceroy is asked to "secure a trustworthy mediator or friend at Court to report promptly to the Emperor and take his orders," and he is further advised to give presents to the mediator, for "when people visited the tomb of dead saints, they offer flowers and sweetmeats for gaining their favours. How much more are presents necessary to gain the favour of living men."[1] The Sikh chronicles mention, again and again, how the powerful advocacy of Wazir Khan operated in favour of the Gurus even against the Provincial authorities of Lahore,[2] and even if we make due allowance for exaggerations, it does not seem improbable that the influence of Wazir Khan at the imperial Court was always an important factor in favour of Hargobind and indirectly helped the development of his plans. But it was primarily the Guru's tact and his continued connection with the Government which enabled him to organise a defensive force on which he might fall back if the occasion arose.

But all this the people could not see and they complained that the Guru had been concoursing with the enemies of his faith. The exigencies of his position and his connection with the Government did not allow him to remain continually at Amritsar and the people complained that the Guru had been living a roving and a wandering life. Indeed, the new situation and the adjustments that were necessary to meet it could not be appreciated and a good deal of misunderstanding arose. Moreover, when the Guru's career was reviewed as a whole one might say that the new policy, after all, did not serve him well. In spite of his alleged victories he was driven from pillar to post till at last he was compelled to seek refuge in the hills. And, as Wilson says, the rising of the Sikhs under Guru Hargobind

1 Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 82, 83.

2 Macauliffe. *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 96. 187, 195.

"seems to have been regarded as a mere local disturbance, involving no political crisis, much less as indicating the future development of an independent State."[1] But it is apparent that whatever might have been the immediate results of Guru Hargobind's military adventures, looked at from a wider standpoint the Guru's victories were ceratinly not as useless as they seem. These successes against innumerable odds could not but inspire the Skihs with self-confidence and give them an exalted sense of their own worth. They had hitherto been kept under heels by the Mussalmans but now they learnt, for the first time, that under proper guidance and control they could meet the Mussalmans on an equal footing or even gain the better. This consciousness of their own worth arising out of their own trying experiences became, as we shall see later on, a great national asset. Guru Hargobind demonstrated a possibility—the possibility of the Sikhs' openly assuming an attitude of defiance against the Mughal Government—and considerably prepared the way for the thorough reformation they received in the hands of Guru Gobind Singh. But all this was much more than what the Guru's contemporaries could either see or understand, and it is no wonder that Hargobind was misunderstood and his career misrepresented.

At the same time, it will not do for us to forget that the nature of the Guru's following had been changing and produced reactions which were also bound to lead to misapprehensions. We have seen that the exigencies of his position led Guru Hargobind to enlist even persons of questionable antecedents in his service, and though in some cases, as in that of Bidhi Chand, a notorious robber, who ended his days as a devout and saintly follower of the Guru[2], the new contact led to complete reclamation, it would be too much to expect that this could be true in the majority of cases. The hope of booty and plunder must have attracted many of these to the Guru much more than any real religious motive and their activities could not but discredit the

1 J. R. A. S., 1846, p. 46.

2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 225, 226.

movement to which they formally belonged.[1] All this seems probable though, naturally, the Sikh chronicles do not support any such conclusion. Be that as it may, far more important for our purposes is the fact that as result of the propaganda work, particularly of Guru Arjan, who is said to have converted the entire Jat peasantry of the Manjha tract, a new situation was arising which called for new methods. The Sikhs had been increasing greatly in numbers and most of these new recruits were Jats. There can be no doubt that by the time of Guru Hargobind the Jats formed by far the most preponderant element in the Sikh community and with their accession in increasing numbers new forces were bound to be released. As we have suggested elsewhere,[2] the permission to take animal diet that was given by Guru Hargobind might very well have been a necessary and inevitable concession to the traditional habits of the Jats and it becomes incumbent on us to acquaint ourselves with the character and temperament of these people and their traditions and tendencies so that we might understand more clearly the possible reactions.

Now then, who were these Jats? We must confess that we do not definitely know. The question of the origin of the Jats, and with them, of the Rajputs and Gujars, has long engaged the attention of eminent scholars but the results hitherto achieved have not been conclusive. We can only say that there is a general consensus of opinion[3] that all these tribes were foreigners, who entered India from their original home near the Oxus some time between the third and seventh centuries of the Christian era. There is also reason to believe that the Jats with whom we are primarily concerned, *viz.*, the Jats of the Manjha and the Malwa tracts, came to their present habitats from the south and east, whatever might have been their original mode

1 For instance, Mohsin Fani states that there was a disciple of Guru Hargobind, named Badhata, "who was at first a thief, and his disciples exercised later the profession of thieving; they showed themselves very obedient to the orders of their master, and believed that stealing for him deserved praise and recompense." (*Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 284).

2 Volume I of this work, p. 270.

3 Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, p. 97.

of intrusion.[1] The distribution of the Jats throughout the Punjab and the lower Indus valley seems to suggest that they came from outside India through Baluchistan and spread gradually over the Southern Punjab and a considerable portion of Rajputana. Another wave of migration commenced and this time they moved in a northerly direction and settled in the valleys of the Jumna and the Sutlej.

These conclusion are, however, highly problematical and fortunately they do not affect our main enquiry. We are primarily concerned with the characteristics of these people and, though direct evidence regarding the period of which we have been speaking is rather scarce, it is not difficult to guess the position in a general way from a study of certain survivals and the influences still at work. In the first place, almost all writers on the subject are, more or less, agreed that one of the fundamental traits in the Jat character has been the instinct of tribal freedom and of tribal kinship. In his learned work on *Punjab Customary Law* Tupper tries to show that in the Punjab the history of property has been the history of tribal disintegration. "There is abundant evidence that collective property preceded several ownership. In many places the irruptions of particular tribes or the turbulent conquests of those Sikh fighting corporations known as misls have superimposed rights originating in simple violence on subjugated cultivating communities, but if we penetrate below the surface.....we find in every district that joint property still often resides in communities larger than mere families."[2] Clear traces of communal property invariably survive and "the idea of common blood and descent has by no means died out."[3]

1 Denzil Ibbetson, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

2 Tupper *Punjab Customary Law* Vol. II Introduction pp. 1, 2.

Soon after the annexation of the Punjab› investigations were started with regard to the customary laws of the province with the view of discovering some principles on which they might be codified. The enquiry was continued by successive officials and soon a considerable body of literature grew up on the subject. This, together with his own independent researches on the subject, formed the immediate background of Tupper's work. It will thus be seen that Tupper's remarks hold good regarding the position towards the middle of the 19th century.

3 *Ibid.* p. 9.

The distinguishing characteristic of the "Zemindari estate" which survives in almost every district is undivided proprietary right, and even where the *pattidari* tenure has begun disintegration the communal origin of property still regulates its distribution.[1] Tupper's conclusion is that "the general diffusion of property, either still communal or once wearing that character, is apparent," and of the Jats particularly, he says that whether Sikh, Hindu or Mussalman, they are agriculturists, their organisation by clans is notorious, and "they are habitually grouped in village communities. Wherever Jats are to be found, there tribal influence and kinship are still at work."[2]

If such was the position when the sceptre of the Punjab passed from the Sikhs to the British, tribal influences and tribal cohesion must have been stronger at the time of which we have been speaking, for all authorities are agreed that the Sikh regime was attended with circumstances which inevitably led to tribal disintegration and the creation of new proprietary rights. Specially during the period of the Misls, which have been very aptly described as "fighting corporations,"[3] the very life of the community depended on military strength and necessarily physical prowess counted far more than age, birth or other considerations. The most important tie between the chiefs and their dependents was one of military service and a new system of tenure, not unlike the feudal, automatically grew up. Avoiding details it may at once be pointed out that the different kinds of tenures that came into existence, whether *pattidari* or *misaldari*, *tobadari* or *jogirdari*, were all equally destructive of tribal ownership. The settlement of a miscellanous collection of cultivators by capitalists who obtained grants of land on condition of bringing it under cultivation, is said to have been specially encouraged under Sikh rule[4] and the result, as can be easily seen, was the creation of new proprietary rights. In short, as Tupper says, "the general result of Sikh rule was to destory the old tenures

1 Tupper, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Introduction, p. 2.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
3 *Ibid.*, *op.*, p, 1.
4 *Ibbetson*, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

of the century" and "reduce squatters and inheritors to the same level."[1]

There can thus be no doubt that tribal solidarity among the Jats was exceptionally strong during Mughal days and that tribal considerations formed an important factor in their daily lives. The strength of tribal cohesion and exclusiveness is also indicated in other ways. Tribal feuds survive to this day in the refusal to intermarry. The Dhillons would intermarry with all *gots* except with the Bals. "The story is that a family bard or mirasi from a Dhillon village was refused help, when in difficulties in the Bal country, and in revenge cursed the whole Bal clan. Mirasis were in those days more of a power than they are now and the Dhillon clan took up the feud, which survives to this day in the refusal to intermarry."[2] The Panuns of Nowshera and Chandriwala will not intermarry with the Sindhu Jats of the Sirhali neighbourhood and the reason is said to be "a murder by a Sirhali man of a Panun connection by marriage." Instances like these might be multiplied. The Sikh chronicles also, in many places, refer to the tribal solidarity of the Jats of the Manjha and the Malwa tracts. For instance, we are told that "Kala and Karam Chand, two brothers of the Marhaj tribe, complained to Guru Har Rai that the people of the Kaura tribe did not allow them to live among them. The Guru called Jait Pirana, the head of the Kaura tribe, and endeavoured to induce him to give five ploughs of land to the complainants for their maintenance." It is said that Jait Pirana replied with the characteristic Punjabi proverb, "*gras daiye, bas na daiye*," i. e. give a morsel to eat but not land to live upon, and "the Guru was at last compelled to advise the Marhaj brothers to take forcible possession of the land around them and call it Marhaj."[3] Ziwan, a young Sikh, gave up his life on the call of the Guru, and the Bairars, the tribe to which he belonged, hastened to the Guru to express their displeasure.[4] When Tegh Bahadur was executed

1 Tupper, *op., cit.*, p. 31.

2 *Amritsar Gazetteer*, 1914, pp. 35, 36.

3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.* Vol. IV, pp. 292, 293.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 298.

at Delhi, a Sikh belonging to the Labana tribe was heartily grieved to see the beloved Guru's dead body publicly exposed and reproached his *tribesmen* about it.[1] All these very clearly show that tribal consciousness was a very living factor in the life of the Jats. We would now bring this argument to a close by referring to one other matter of a different character but which proves the strength of tribal organisation. Ibbetson is of opinion that "it is a mistake to suppose that the village community wholly supersedes tribal organisation. Very generally tribes hold compact territories." In support of his statement he mentions the characteristic "thapa organisation."[2] The villages of the tribe constitute one or more thapas or tribal groups of village communities held together by feudal ties and by the fact or fiction of common ancestry." He adds that "under the Moghuls the revenue administration used to be based upon these thapas, the revenue being assessed upon the group to villages as a whole and being distributed among them by the Headman of the collective villages under the presidency of the Headman of the parent village."

Next, in attempting to form a correct estimate of the character of these people, it is important to remember that tradition is exceptionally strong on the point that many of them had been comparatively recent immigrants to the tracts they occupied.[3] Lepel Griffin is of opinion that the ancestors of the Malwa Jats were simple Hindu peasants, who, about the middle of the sixteenth century emigrated from Jaisalmer.[4] It is said of the Hatiar Jats that they emigrated from Shahpur to Gujarat in Akbar's time.[5] The Tenwana Jats first entered Mathura and Aligarh as late as 1600.[6] Indeed, migrations on a small scale were continually going on. Sarker says: "In order to understand the real cause of many of the village disorders in Mughal

1 Macauliffe *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 388.

2 Ibbetson *op. cit.*, p. 23.

3 Ibbetson *ibid.*, p. 104. Rose, *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, Vol. II. pp. 369, 370.

4 Lepel Griffin, *Laws of inheritance to Sikh Chiefships*, p. 3.

5 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 330.

6 J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III. p. 20.

times, we must bear in mind that the population was dynamic, not static. Internal movements of the people were constantly going on. In different generations different tribes were migrating to new districts and trying to push away the old settlers and make a home for themselves.[1] Villages quarrelled with villages,[2] tribes with tribes, and the weaker among them were always liable to be ousted by the stronger and the more compact. In such a situation tribal cohesion was practically the only safeguard against ruin or even extinction and it becomes easier to understand why tribal instincts were so strong and survived even when the objective situation had changed in a manner which made their continuance no longer a necessity. It is also important to remember that with tribal organisation cetain notions of tribal freedom went hand in hand and we might well surmise that the Jats were used to a certain type of self-government of their own, however limited and rudimentary it might have been.

As we have already said, direct information about these people, before a section of them attained political importance, is very meagre but, nevertheless, the curious fact is that the few references that we get in historical records, here and there, almost uniformly bring out two of the most fundamental traits in the character of these people. Firishta says that at the time of its return from Somnath the army of Sultan Mahmud had been molested by the Jats, who resided near the Jood mountains. Mahmud soon returned to punish them and as the country was intersected by rivers he ordered 1400 boats to be built, each of which was armed with six iron spikes, projecting from the prows and sides, to prevent their being boarded by the enemy, who were expert in that kind of warfare." The Jats, on their part, sent their women and children, together with their most valuable effects, to the neighbouring islands and prepared to meet the

1 J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 20.

2 An interesting example of this is found in the Sikh records. It is said that "Wadali orginally founded by Chambal and Man tribes had become a prosperous village, and on this account the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages made war upon them. The Wadali people unaccustomed to a marauding life were defeated." and besought the mediation of Guru Arjan. (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. p. 34).

Sultan. A bloody battle ensued and ultimately the Jats suffered a total defeat, not for any want of courage or skill but mainly because of the projecting spikes of the Moslem boats which created havoc when they ran against the simple Jat boats.[1] Next we hear of the Jats in connection with a rising of theirs which Muhammad bin Tughlaq had to suppress. On this occasion they formed *Mandals* round Sunam and Samana, withheld tribute, and plundered the roads.[2] In 1398 when Timur marched through the jungle from Ahruni in Karnal to Tohana, he found a tract inhabitted by Jats who were Mussalmans only in name, and who were without equals in theft and highway robbery ; they plundered caravans on the road and were a terror to Mussalmans and travellers. On Timur's approach the Jats fled, but he pursued them and put 2,000 of the "demon-like" Jats to the sword.[3] Again, Babar writes : "If one go into Hindustan the Jats and Guzars always pour down in countless hordes from hill and plain for loot in bullock and buffalo. These ill-omened peoples are just senseless oppressors. Formerly their doings did not concern us much because the country was the enemy's ; but they began the same senseless work after we had taken it. When we reached Sialkot, they fell in tumult on poor and needy folks who were coming out of the town to our camp, and stripped them bare. I had the silly thieves sought for, and ordered two or three of them cut to pieces."[4] It has even been said that occasionally a single Jat village would plunder an imperial baggage train.[5] These references may be few and far between but they unmistakably show that the Jats were habitual plunderers. Indeed, all competent authorities are agreed that one of the fundamental traits in the Jat character has been the marauding instinct, and it is significant that the proverbial wisdom of the villages describes a Jat thus : "He is your friend only so long as you have a stick in your hand. If he runs amock it takes God

1 Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power*, Vol. I, pp. 81, 82.
2 Elliott, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. III, p. 245.
3 *Ibid*, pp. 428, 429, 492, 493.
4 Beveridge, *Memoirs of Babar*, Vol. III, p. 454.
5 Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 55.

to hold him" ;[1] "a Jat, a Bhat, a caterpillar, and a widow woman—these four are best hungry. If they eat their fill they do harm" ; "the Jat, like a wound, is better kept when bound" ;[2] and so on. Ibbetson is of opinion that the Jat is usually content to cultivate his lands and pay his revenue in peace and quietness if people would let him do so, though when he goes wrong, he "takes to anything from gambling to murder with perhaps a preference for stealing other peoples' wives and cattle."[3] It thus appears that there has been a predatory trait in the Jat character, which has made him impatient of control and prone to aggrandise himself at the expense of others.

At the same time, history affords us many examples to show that the Jats were fighters *par excellence* and that their courage did not fail even in the most desperate circumstances. We have seen that even the invincible Sultan Mahmud, whose name had already become a terror to the people of Northern India, had to fight desperately hard before he could bring them to their knees and that the much-dreaded Timur was no dread to them. We would mention here only one other incident which illustrates admirably the fighting qualities of the Jats. As a result of Aurangzib's open attacks on Hinduism and the forcible removal of the curved stone railing presented by Dara Shukoh to Keshav Rai's temple, the Jat peasantry of Mathura broke out in open rebellion in 1669 under the leadership of Gokla, the Zamindar of Tilpat. The pargana of Sadabad was looted and the disorder soon spread to the Agra district. The disturbances continued throughout the year and the Emperor had at last to take the field in person. The rebels were now most vigorously attacked, "when, being unable to resist any longer, many of them slaughtered their women and rushed upon the swords of the Moghuls fighting with the recklessness of despair." Next month, "after a very long and bloody contest they gave way before the superior artillery of the Moghuls, and fled to Tilpat which was besieged for three days and at last stormed on the point of the

1 Risely, *People of India*, p. 132.
2 Ibbetson, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 102.

sword." But though the Jats lost their leader and suffered such a great reverse, disorders continued and even in March, 1670, Hassan Ali Khan was "engaged in enslaving and capturing the rebels, plundering their houses, extirpating their family, and dismantling their strong (mud) forts."[1] It is clear that a people who, with no discipline and no resources, could keep at bay the organised forces of a mighty Empire for about a year possessed military qualities of no mean order.

A question may, however, very well be raised that in the above review the Jats have mostly been taken in a lump and though, no doubt, a few referencee have been given which have a special application to the Manjha and the Malwa tracts, it may yet remain a matter of doubt as to how far the above conclusions hold true with regard to the Jats of those places. But all writers who have given more than passing attention to this question are almost unanimous in holding that the Jats, whether Sikh, Hindu or Mussalman, and whether of the Central Punjab, the Eastern Punjab, the Doab or the lower Jumna valley, exhibit the same essential qualities. Speaking of the Jats of the western sub-montane or those settled in the foot of the hills west of Lahore, Ibbetson, who may undoubtedly be regarded as an authority on the subject, remarks : "The Jat tribes now to be considered are essentially agricultural, and occupy the same social position as do those of the eastern plains, whom, indeed, they resemble in all respects."[2] There is no definite line of demarcation between the Jats of the eastern sub-montane and the Sikh Jats to the south, or the Jats of the western sub-montane to the west,[3] and the south-eastern Jats, or those who occupy the Jumna districts, Jind, Rohtak and Hissar, "are the same people in every respect as the Jats of the Jamna-Ganges Doab and the lower Jumna valley, differing, however, in little save religion from the great Sikh tribes of the Malwa."[4] Indeed, it has been

1 J, N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 290-295.
2 Ibbetson *op. cit.*, p. 114.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 124.
4 *Ibid*, p. 126.

stressed by several writers that change of religion hardly effects much change in the character of these people. As we have seen, the "demon-like" Jats who harassed Timur were "Mussalmans only in name," and we think that it requires no imagination to recognise a family resemblance between the Jats "who poured down in prodigious numbers from their hills and wilds in order to carry off oxen and buffaloes," and "plundered the Turki garrison on its way from Sialkot to Babar's camp"[1] and the Sikhs who likewise poured down from the hills, "fell upon the rear of Nadir Shah's army laden with the spoils of Delhi and carried away whatever they could lay their hands upon ;"[2] or between the Jats who formed themselves into *mandals*, withheld tribute and plundred the roads, and the Sikhs, who in 1734 divided themselves into "*dals*" and opened a systematic campaign of plunder and rapine.[3] Sarkar says that in the darkest days of Guru Gobind Singh's iife his followers became plunderers who formed themselves into bands in order to harass the Mughal officers and raid parts of the Punjab, and he mentions a letter of Aurangzib in which the fate of one such band is described.[4] But this was nothing new ; the Sikhs were merely following the traditional tactics of the race to which they mostly belonged.

These were the people who, during the days of Guru Arjan and his son, began, in increasing numbers, to swell the ranks of Sikhism and it is not difficult to see that in order to accommodate these people within the system certain readjustments were bound to occur. For instance, the policy of non-resistance the Guru Amar Das adopted towards the Muhammadans who had settled at Goindwal and who constantly annoyed the Sikhs in various ways and his dictum that "it is not proper for saints to take revenge"[5] would hardly have suited the temper and tradition of these people. Thus the situation, both external and internal, made an adherence to the earlier path of Sikhism, more or less, impossible and it is

1 Elliott, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 240.
2 Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 216.
3 *Ibid.*, pp. 206, 207.
4 Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 319.
5 Vol. I of this work, p. 178.

mainly the non-recognition of this basic fact that has been responsible for the charges levelled against the Guru.

The way in which the Guru met the situation speaks a good deal for his resourcefulness and shrewd practical sense. As we have already said, his acceptance of office under the Mughal Government was a fine stroke of policy, and the building of the fort of Sri Hargobindpur and the preparation in advance of a retreat at Kiratpur speak equally of his clear foresight. He maintained peace with the Governmet as long as he could, but he had no illusions regarding the outcome of the struggle if it did come after all, and planned accordingly. This is why we find that he was never flustered and his equanimity was never disturbed, however desperate the situation might be. This cool imperturbability served him admirably throughout his life but his greatest assets appear to have been his lovable personality and his never-failing sense of humour, which made him the best of masters and the best of friends. This sense of humour did not desert the Guru even in the field of battle when his very life was hanging in the balance, and made it easy for him to enjoy a joke at his own expense. Mohsin Fani relates several stories which amply illustrate this lovable trait in Guru Hargobind's character. We are told that in the battle of Kartarpur "a man aimed a blow at the Guru, who parried it and struck him with his blade, saying: 'Not in that manner, but so the sword is used,' and with one blow he made an end of his foe." A companion of the Guru is said to have asked Mohsin Fani to explain the purport of the words with which the Guru struck his blow and he remarked: "It was to give instruction, as it belongs to a Guru to teach also how to strike a blow with a sword; for a Guru is called a teacher: he did not strike out of anger, which would have been blamable."[1] It appears to us that Mohsin Fani has been rather too serious with regard to this incident and it is more probable that it was nothing but an exhibition of the Guru innate sense of humour. Be that as it may, Mohsin Fani further tells us that there was a Brahman named Deva who "counted

1 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 275.

himself among the wise. He visited the Guru, and seated himself one day upon the bed of Baba Jev, who was the son of a Guru. The people said : 'Do not sit there.' He asked : 'Why not ?' They answered : 'This is the place of the Guru.' He said : 'Is perhaps the figure of a Guru not that of a man, or have I not a rational soul manifest in me ? Or can I not enjoy what another eats or drinks ?' This speech came to the ears of Guru Hargobind. He called that man before him, and said : 'O Deva ! is not the whole world but one being ?' He replied : 'It is'. The Guru pointed to an ass, and asked : 'Do you know what this is ?' Deva replied : 'You are one with God, and therefore you are also this.' The Guru laughed and was not at all angry."[1] These anecdotes show clearly what an equable temper, what an abundant fund of humour and what a lovable personality the Guru possessed and partially explains why he was so passionately and zealously served by a devoted band of followers through all his trials and tribulations.

Mohsin Fani says that when, after Guru Hargobind's death, "they had placed his corpse upon the pyre, and when the fire rose up in high flames, a Rajput called Rajarama, who had been his servant, precipitated himself into the fire, and walked several paces in the midst of the flames, until he reached the feet of the corpse, and having laid his face upon the soles of the Guru's feet, he did not move until he expired. After him the son of a Jat, who was in the service of Hargobind' s son-in-law, leaped into the fire. Many other Sikhs wished to follow his example, but the Guru Harrayi forbade it."[2] These eloquent examples of devotion and self-scrifice enable us to understand the Guru's successes against the heaviest of odds and show conclusively what high esteem he commanded as a leader and as a man.

1 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, pp. 279, 280.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 280, 281.

CHAPTER II

THE SUCCESSORS OF GURU HARGOBIND

I. Guru Har Rai

The onward march of consolidation and progress, which had been the chief characteristic of Sikhism under the successors of Guru Nanak received a set-back after the death of Guru Hargobind and a period of disintegration commenced. Guru Arjan had practically completed the organisation of his followers on peaceful lines and under Guru Hargobind Sikhism had added unto itself an army, however weak or small it might have been. A tradition had thus been created which was destined to transform the entire ideology of the Sikhs and of Sikhism but that consummation was still more than half a century off, and, in the interval, a new situation arose in which, for a time, the forces of disruption succeeded in making considerable headway. The continued absence of the Guru from Amritsar, the rise of dissentient sects and rivals to the Guru, the deterioration of the *masand* system, the intervention of the state and such other factors of greater or lesser importance soon brought about a state of affairs in which the centrifugal tendencies were very much in evidence, and when Guru Gobind Singh ascended the *gaddi* of his father he was faced with a situation that was well-nigh desparate.

Guru Hargobind, as we have seen, was succeeded by Har Rai, the second son of his eldest son Baba Gurditta. Unfortunately, from now onwards our materials become so unsatisfactory that it is not possible to attempt an account of the pontifiacte of Har Rai in any detail whatsoever. Mohsin Fani, who had been of so much assistance to us in reconstructing the history of Guru Hargobind, no doubt, claims that he was a great friend of Guru Har Rai too, but the only thing that he says of him is that "invested with the Guru's dignity Har-rayi remained one

year at Kiratpur. When in the year of the Hejirah 1055 (A.D. 1645) Najabet Khan, the son of Sharogh Mirza, by order of the Padshah Shahjehan, invaded with an army the land of the Raja Tara Chand, and made the Raja a prisoner, the Guru Har-rayi betook himself to Thapal, which town is situated in the District of the Raja Keramperkas, not far from Sirhind."[1] This incident shows that Guru Har Rai was anxious to live a peaceful life and that to avoid complications he was even prepared to leave his place of abode for a shelter elsewhere. This is all that we get from the *Dabistan*, and though the Sikh records particularly the *Suraj Prakash*, give us many details, most of these are useless for our purposes, whatever their value might be to a religious enthusiast.

However, out of this medley of myths and legends a few facts come out which show that, though according to the advice of his grandfather he maintained an army about 2,000 strong as a precautionary measure[2] and his court displayed "the pomp and circumstances of a semi-independent military chieftain,"[3] he entirely gave up the policy of Guru Hargobind and devoted himself to peaceful activities. By this time the old *masands* were becoming largely corrupt and unreliable, and the Guru is said to have hit upon a new expedient for carrying on the work of propaganda. We are told that a Bairagi monk named Bhagat Gir was converted to Sikhism together with his followers by Guru Har Rai. He was renamed Bhagat Bhagwan and was appointed "to preach Sikhism in the east, where he and his followers established about 360 *gaddis*, most of which are still extant." Another devoted disciple of Guru Har Rai was appointed to preach Sikhism in the central districts of the Punjab.[4] Thus were established the first two *Bakshishes* (bounties) or centres of missionary work and these proved so successful that three others were added, one by Guru Tegh Bahadhur and the others by Guru Gobind Singh. "As the *masands* or missonaries

1 *Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 282.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 277.
3 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 685.
4 Teja Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

appointed by the earlier Gurus became more and more corrupt, this new order of preachers attained more prominence and was especially useful in spreading Sikhism in far distant and difficult places."

It has also been claimed on behalf of Guru Har Rai that silently he achieved much, inasmuch as some of the most powerful Sikh families "were set on their way to greatness by the fostering care of Har Rai." This claim is mainly based on the tradition that Phul, the progenitor of the Phulkhan House (named after him), received blessings at the hands of Guru Har Rai, which proved the foundation of the future greatness of the family. The story runs that in one of his preaching missions the Guru came to the Malwa country, where two brothers named Kala and Karam Chand of the Marhaj tribe waited on him and complained that owing to the hostility of the Kaura tribe they were finding it difficult to secure a suitable place of habitaion. The Guru tried to settle the matter amicably, but when that failed he helped the Marhaj brothers to take forcible possession of a piece of land and settle there with their tribesmen. After this the Guru took up his residence at a place called Nathana and went on with his work of propaganda. There Kala visited the Guru off and on and, on one occasion, took his two nephews, Sandali and Phul, with him. In the Guru's presence Phul was found putting his hand on his belly and, when the Guru enquired why he was doing this, Kala told him that Phul could not speak and whenever he felt hungry he would slap his belly. The Guru took compassion on him and said : "He shall became great, famous, and wealthy. The steeds of his descendants shall drink water as far as the Jamna ; they shall have sovereignty for many generations, and be honoured in proportion as they serve the Guru." This may very well be a prophecy *ex-eventu* but, at the same time, it seems clear that the obscure Phul first came into some prominence under the patronage of Guru Har Rai and thus laid the foundation of the future greatness of his family. "Phul had six sons, from the eldest of whom, namely Tilok Singh, the Rejas of Nabha and Jind are descended. From Phul's second son, Ram

Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala is descended. These three are known as the Phul ke Raje, or Phulkiah chiefs"[1]

Nothing further of importance is known regarding the achievements of Guru Har Rai. He adhered strictly to the peaceful policy that he had adopted on his accession and some of his organisational and missionary efforts were undoubtedly pariseworthy and fruitful. On the whole, his pontificate was uneventful in so far as it lacked the romance of his grandfather's military adventures, but towards the end of his career, he unfortunately became involved in an incident which was pregnant with consequences, and which very much embittered his last days. In the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan, Guru Har Rai is said to have sided with Dara Shukoh and, on the latter's defeat, had to face the wrath of Aurangzib. The Sikh records state that the Prince's life had once been saved by a medicine sent by the Guru[2] and we are also told that "Dara Shukoh had paid him visits of respect in the course of his general devotion to Sadhus."[3] They had thus become great friends, and when after his defeat at the hands of Auranzib the Prince fled towards the Punjab and sought the Guru's assistance, Har Rai naturally could not refuse. It was also in the fitness of things that, in a quarrel between Auranzib and Dara, Har Rai would side with the latter, who represented the tradition of Akbar and whose chief fault in the eyes of the orthodox Muslims was his so-called apostasy. Be that as it may, the way in which the assistance was given by Guru Har Rai is not very clear. Some say that the Guru and the Prince had an interview on the right bank of the Beas. As he was being hotly pursued the Prince retreated by opposing the passage of the river and impeding the progress of Aurangzib's army as much as possible.[4] Others say that the Guru's help amounted merely to blessings,[5] while

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 293-295.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 277-279. *Panth Prakash*, pp. 121, 122.
3 Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol, III, pp. 311, 312.
4 Macauliffe, *ibid.*, pp. 302, 303.
5 Sarkar, *ibid.*, p. 311. See also Macauliffe, *ibid.*, p. 302.

Trump asserts that Guru Har Rai had actually joined Dara Shukoh with his Sikhs.[1] The *Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh*, however, puts the matter in a somewhat different light and as in point of time it is the nearest of the materials we have and as it records independent evidence we should give it the consideration that it rightly deserves. Sujan Rai writes: "When after his defeat Dara Shukoh came to Lahore he became very much afraid of his brother and made up his mind to flee to Multan and (then to) Kandahar. Of this he spoke to some of his confidants. Raja Rajrup said that he would go home to make better arrangements for the collection of troops, and leaving his son and Vakeel at Lahore, he went away. And after a few days the Vakeel and the son also fled. Guru Har Rai, who had come with a large army, left his camp with the plea that he was going to collect more troops for him.[2] Thus it appears that Guru Har Rai had actually joined Dara with his troops but when he found that the Prince's cause was hopeless and that he was himself thinking of giving up the fight, the Guru left him to his fate and came back to Kiratpur.

The Guru, however, had to suffer for this. As soon as Aurangzib was firmly seated on his throne he summoned Har Rai to his presence. The Guru somehow excused himself and sent his eldest son Ram Rai to represent him at the imperial court. The Sikh records state that Ram Rai, who was a very clever and, at the same time, a very ambitious young man, soon began to curry favour with the Emperor by acting in a manner that was hardly in line with the instructions that he had received from his father and which was highly derogatory to the dignity of the Guru's house. We are told that to please the Emperor he performed several miracles and made a name at Delhi as a thaumaturge. But the climax of his delinquency was reached when he did not hesitate even to distort a word in a verse of Guru Nanak, in order to please the Emperor. The story runs that the Emperor assembled some Muslim divines and in that meetihg Ram Rai

1 Trumpp, *op. cit.*. p. lxxxv.

2 *Khulasatu-i-Tawarikh*, Zafar Hasan's edition, p. 513.

was asked to explain what Guru Nanak had meant by the following verse in the *Asa di Var* :

> "The ashes of the Muhammedan fall into the potter's clod ; Vessels and bricks are fashioned from them ; they cry out as they burn."

Ram Rai saw the difficulty but he was not the man to be caught in so easily. He replied that the text had been needlessly corrupted by ignorant persons and the word Mussalman inserted in place of the word *beiman* or faithless.[1] It is said that the Emperor and the Muslim divines were all pleased with the reply but in averting the wrath of the Emperor Ram Rai brought upon himself the wrath of his father. When this news reached Guru Har Rai, he was beside himself with anger. The Sikhs regarded the Guru's words as immutable and the *Granath Sahib* as the very embodiment of the Gurus, and consequently, in their eyes, this was an offence which appeared sacrilegious in the extreme. The result was that when, soon after, the Guru felt that his end was approaching, Ram Rai was superseded and his younger brother Har Krishan, who was barely six years old, was nominated as his successor by Guru Har Rai.

II. Guru Har Krishan

The Sikh chronicles state that Ram Rai was not the man to accept such a decision without a struggle. With the help of a few recalcitrant *masands* he declared himself Guru, disputed the succession and urged his superior claims before the Emperor. Guru Har Krishan was thereupon summoned to Delhi and after some hesitation and delay he arrived there. But, unfortunately, soon after his arrival at Delhi he had an attack of small-pox and expired in 1664. This is all that we know of the pontificate of Guru Har Krishan. But the whole thing appears to be involved in some obscurity and the way in which it is set forth in the Sikh records is hardly credible. In the first place, though Ram Rai is sometimes represented as having been his father's envoy

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 308, 309. *Panth Prakash*, pp. 122, 123.

at the imperial court, he was in reality nothing but a hostage whom the Emperor kept as a security for the continued good conduct of Guru Har Rai. Secondly, it should not be forgotten that at the time of his father's death Ram Rai was a mere boy in his early teens and it is difficult to believe that he had done anything on his own initiative. Thirdly, we should remember that all that we know of Ram Rai we know mostly from the Sikh records, where, in all probability, the character of Ram Rai has been unjustly blackened. At the same time, it appears to us that if the Sikh accounts are carefully analysed, they provide us with, more or less, clear hints as to the truth of the matter. We are told that in this episode of Ram Rai's attempted seizure of the *gaddi* of his father the prime mover was a *masand* named Gurdas.[1] Several other *masands* also joined him and the object of the party appears to have been to enrich and aggrandise themselves, using Ram Rai as a tool for the purpose. The *masand* system had been slowly deteriorating and even during the days of Guru Hargobind difficulties seem to have arisen.[2] But the Guru was yet strong and the *masands* could not go far in their recalcitrance. They were no longer the honest, pious men whom Guru Arjan had appointed. "These collectors were at first chosen for their piety, integrity and high position and were, probably, honorary officers. The office, however, soon became hereditary in the families of the first incumbents, and gradually falling into unworthy hands became an instrument of jobbery and corruption."[3] The death of Guru Har Rai at the early age of thirty, leaving behind two minor sons and nominating the younger of them to the succession, opened to these men the desired opportunity and some of them took up the cause of Ram Rai with a view to bringing about a situation in which the dispute about the succession and the consequent weakening of the Guru's position would open to them unrestrained field for malversation of the offerings. Others again remained loyal to Guru Har Krishan and the quarrel between the two groups

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 316.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
3 Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 73, foot-note.

resulted in the summoning of the Guru to Delhi by the Emperor. Thus Aurangzib was given an opportunity of intervening in a matter which, by all means, should have been kept away from him and the whole incident showed up the Sikhs in a light which was hardly dignified.

On the other hand, it appears that the *masands* availed themselves fully of the opportunities that the situation presented to them. We are told : 'The *masands* began to beat and plunder poor Sikhs, and threatend with the Guru's curse all who resented their conduct. Ram Rai's desire to collect large offerings was not fulfilled. The *masands* became proud and rebellious, and kept the greater part of the offerings for themselves. They treated Ram Rai as a nonentity, for they deemed that all the Sikhs were in their power, and that they could appoint to the Guruship whomsoever they pleased. Ran Rai found himself completely at their mercy, and was obliged to act accoding to their dictation."[1] In fact, Ram Rai's tender age precludes the possibility of his having acted as a principal at any stage in this affair and there can be little doubt that the whole thing was engineered by some of the *masands* solely for their own purposes. But in doing this they struck at the most vital spot of the Sikh organisation and the result was a progressive disintegration.

III. Guru Tegh Bahadur

This is very clearly illustrated by the pontificate of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the successor of Guru Har Krishan. Sikh tradition affirms that during Har Krishan's last days, at a moment when he had temporarily gained consciousness, "the Guru called for five paise and a cocoanut. He took them, and not being able to move his body, waved his hand three times in the air in token of circumambulating his successor, and said 'Baba Bakale,' that is, his successor would be found in the village of Bakala."[2] Now at Bakala resided the Sodhi Khatris, the kinsmen of the Guru's

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol, IV, pp. 316, 317.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 329.

family, and when this news got abroad twenty-two of them, we are told, came forward and claimed the Guruship each on his own behalf and forcibly seized the offerings brought by the Sikhs for the Guru. But at Bakala also resided, with his mother and wife, Tegh Bahadur, the youngest son of Guru Hargobind. We are told that a Sikh named Makkhan Shah came with a present of 500 gold *muhars* for the Guru but found to his dismay that it was all uncertainty and confusion at Bakala and nobody could say who the true Guru was. It is said that thereupon Makkhan Shah resolved to make trial of the pretenders and became soon convinced that these twenty-two men claimed to be Gurus only with the object of plundering the Sikhs. He then visited Tegh Bahadur, who very soon satisfied Makkhan Shah that he was the real Guru. We are told that Makkhan Shah presented two gold *muhars* to Tegh Bahadur, but the latter straight away enquired of him about the five hundred gold *muhars* that he had brought for presentation to the Guru. Thereupon Makkhan Shah "ascended a house-top and, waving his flag, proclaimed from there, 'I have found the Guru', I have found the Guru.' On hearing this the Sikhs assembled from every quarter and with all due formalities and observances placed Tegh Bahadur, then in his forty-third year and the very image of Guru Nanak, on the Guru's throne."[1]

Whatever might be the merit of this story regarding the discovery of the true successor of Guru Har Krishan, it leaves little room for doubt that Guru Tegh Bahadur succeeded to a position of very great difficulty. The Sodhi Khatris, notably Dhir Mal and Ram Rai, gave him no rest and some of the *masands*, who, as we have seen, had already been getting out of control, began to adopt an attitude of open hostility to the Guru. Of the several incidents narrated by Sikh writers with regard to the period of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life immediately following his accession to the *gaddi*, two appear to us to be remarkable and typical. It appears that Tegh Bahadur's recognition as the legitimate Guru proved too much for Dhir Mal, and, instigated

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 334.

by him, a *masand* named Sihan made an attempt on the Guru's life. He fired a bullet at the Guru and struck him, though fortunately the attack did not prove fatal.[1] Soon after this the Guru went to Amritsar. He bathed in the sacred tank but the ministrants of Har Mandar shut its doors against him and he was not allowed to enter the holy precincts.[2] It is thus evident that the organisational cohesion which had been the glory of Sikhism was becoming a thing of the past and the movement was losing the strength that the Guru's undisputed leadership had given to it.

The Sodhis and the *masands* between them thus made the position too hot for the Guru and he slowly retired towards Kiratpur. But when he reached this place he found that, here too, the jealousy of the Sodhis plagued him and he retired farther into the hills. He bought a piece of land from the Raja of Kahlur and established himself in the village of Makhowal, which later developed into the well-known Sikh town of Anandpur. But the foundation of this retreat still further enraged the Sodhis, and Dhir Mal forthwith began to conspire with Ram Rai to devise some means for the Guru's ruin. On the authority of Malcolm and Forster, Cunningham states that, as a result of the intrigues of Ram Rai at the imperial court, the Guru was summoned to Delhi "as a pretender to power and as a disturber of the peace" but through the intercession of the Raja of Jaipur, who promised to take the Guru with him in his approaching expedition to Assam, he was pardoned.[3] Sikh tradition, however, is entirely different. We are told that when the Guru found that the Sodhis were not leaving him in peace even at Makhowal he though it prudent to leave the stormy scene for a time and went out on travel with his wife and attendants. Guru Tegh Bahadur traversed the Malwa country, visited Kurukshetra and Hardwar and at last reached Patna via Prayag and Benares. There, at Patna, the Guru was visited by Mirza Raja Ram Singh, who was going out on an expedition against the Ahom King, and

1 Macauliffe *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 334.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 336. *Panth Prakash*, p. 128.

3 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

at the Raja's request accompained him to the front. On receipt of the news of the birth of a son the Guru hurried back to Patna, where he remained for some time. He then returned to the Punjab and finally settled down at Anandpur.

But it is not easy to reconcile this story with contemporary history. Guru Gobind Singha was born early in 1666 and the expedition of Mirza Raja Ram Singh against the Ahom King was undertaken two years later.[1] Thus it cannot be true that Guru Tegh Bahadur left Raja Ram Singh on the front when a messenger from Patna brought to him the news of the birth of his son. The Guru's journey to Kamrup, however, is attested by the relics of his visit at Dhubri and other places[2], but it is difficult to say how the two incidents, *viz.*, the Guru's journey to the east and Raja Ram Singh's expedition to Assam, got mixed up.

Be that as it may, it seems that after his return to Patna the Guru stayed on at that place for several years till, at last, his thoughts again turned towards the Punjab. Guru Tegh Bahadur then started for his native land alone, leaving instructions to his family to join him there as soon as he would send for them, apparently because he was dubious as regards the nature of the reception he was likely to get there. It seems, however, that it was not long before the Guru sent for his family and finally settled down at Makhowal.

We now enter upon the more exciting and the more controversial part of Guru Tegh Bahadur's carrer. The Sikh records state that after his return to Makhowal the Guru busied himself in propagating the faith and imparting instruction to his followers but he was not allowed to remain long in peace. Aurangzib's religious policy which aimed at the establishment of

1 Gurbux Singh has suggested a way out of the difficulty. The expedition against Chittagong was carried on in the winter of 1665-66, which corresponds very well with the date of birth of Guru Gobind Singh. The only Rajput of note in the expedition was Raja Subal Singh Sesodia, a commander of 1500. Gurbux Singh evidently implies that the Guru possibly had accompanied this expedition. (*Dacca Review*, 1915, p. 229. foot-note).

2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 358, 360.

an orthodox Sunni state had by now raised a whirlwind throughout the country and it was idle to expect that a man of the position and spiritual eminence of Guru Tegh Bahadur could remain unaffected. The strict Muslim had ever grumbled at the policy inaugurated by Akbar, and his party gradually gained in strength till the whole thing came to a head in the war of succession amnog the sons of Saha Jahan. Dara, as is well known, represented the traditions of the Empire, whereas Aurangzib stood for ultra-theological principles. Necessarily, on the accession of Aurangzib the entire policy of the Empire was reversed and a new era commenced. The following measures that were adopted by Aurangzib during the first ten years of his reign clearly show the extent to which the religion of the Hindus suffered at the hands of the new Emperor. Even in 1644, when Aurangzib was the Viceroy of Gujrat, he had shown his zeal for Islam by desecrating the temple of Chintaman at Ahmedabad and also by the deliberate suppression of various other temples. With his accession to the throne the policy of repression and discrimination became more general. Early in his reign the local officials of Orissa were called upon "to pull down all temples, including even clay huts, built during the last ten or twelve years and to allow no old temples to be repaired."[1] In 1669 an order was passed "to demolish all schools and temples of the infidels and to put down their religious practices and teaching."[2] The magnificent and time-honoured temples of Somnath, Mathura and Benares were demolished and the *Jeziyah* reimposed. Customs duty on Mussalmans was abolished, rewards were given to converts, the Hindus were gradully excluded from public offices, their religious fairs were put down and the celebrations of the *Dewali* and *Holi* were greatly controlled and circumscribed. "A systematic plan was followed for carrying out the policy of iconoclasm. Officers were appointed in all the subdivisions and cities of the Empire.....to enforce the regulations of Islam, such as the suppression of the use of wine and bhang, and of gambling. The destruction of Hindu places of worship

1 Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 265.
2 *Ibid.*

was one of their chief duties, and so large was the number of officers employed in the task that a 'Director-General' had to be placed over them to guide their activity."[1] The Sikhs, who were also infidels, could not expect better treatment than the Hindus and we are told that "Aurangzib ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and the Guru's agents (masands) for collecting the tithes and presents of the faithful to be expelled from the cities."[2] Such was the state of affairs when Tegh Bahadur returned to the Punjab and it was not long before he was caught in its toils.

The Sikh records state that Sher Afghan Khan, the Emperor's Viceroy in Kashmir, "set about converting the Kashmiris by the sword and massacred those who persevered in their adherence to the faith of their forefathers." We are told that later on this extreme policy was to some extent relaxed, but still the situation was desperate enough and the Kashmiri Brahmans, in despair, sought the advice and assistance of Guru Tegh Bahadur. When the Kashmiri Brahmans apprised him of their tale of woe the Guru sat in deep meditation for some time and then advised them to go over to Delhi and make the following representation to the Emperor : "Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, is now seated on the throne of the great Guru Nanak, who is protector of faith and religion. First make him a Mussalman and then all the people, including ourselves, will of our own accord adopt the faith." They did as they were told and as a result the Emperor sent a messenger to Makhowal to summon the Guru. Tegh Bahadur wrote in reply that he would himself go to Delhi after the rainy season, and early in June he started for his destination. In the meantime Aurangzib had sent two messengers to Makhowal to hasten the Guru's departure but when they arrived the latter was already gone. The messengers hurried to Amritsar and there, too, the Guru was not to be found. They informed the Emperor of what they regarded as the Guru's flight, and Aurangzib despatched orders all over the

1 Sarkar, *op. cit*, Vol. III, p. 267.

2 Khafi Khan (II, 652) as quoted in Sarkar, *ibid.*, p. 212.

Empire to search for and arrest the Guru, who was soon captured. The Guru is said to have given a large gold ring to a shepherd boy and asked him to pledge it and bring two rupees' worth of sweets. It is stated that there was absolutely no necessity to part with the ring as the Guru had enough money with him. However, the boy was arrested on suspicion by a police officer, who, in course of his enquiries, came to Tegh Bahadur. The latter readily disclosed his identity and was at once arrested.[1] The Guru was then taken over to Delhi and kept imprisoned in the local jail for some time. The Sikh records give many details as to what followed but the main points that emerge are that the Guru was asked to choose between Islam and death and, when Tegh Bahadur stoutly refused to forsake his own religion and embrace Islam, he was asked to work a miracle and save himself. The Guru's reply was that "a miracle was the wrath of God" and that the Emperor might do with him as he pleased. When all efforts to make him embrace Islam failed the Emperor ordered the Guru's execution and he was beheaded in 1675.

In the *Bachitra Natak* Guru Gobind Singh writes:

"After him (Har Krishan) came Tegh Bahadur,
Who protected the frontal marks and sacrificial threads of the Hindus
And displayed great bravery in the Kal Age.
When he put an end of his life for the sake of holy men
He gave his head but uttered not a groan,
He suffered martyrdom for the sake of his religion;
He gave his head but swerved not from his determination.
God's people would be ashamed
To perform the tricks of mountebanks and cheats"[2]

It will be seen that here we have a confirmation of the main points of importance that we get in the Sikh chronicles, *viz.*, that Guru Tegh Bahadur assisted the Hindus against the religious persecution of Aurangzib and that he had rejected alike the offers of saving his life by embracing Islam or by working a miracle. The Guru's was thus a self-sought martyrdom, a willing sacrifice for religion. Knowing fully well the might of the Emperor

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp, 369, 377.
2 *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 295.

and his own comparative helplessness he yet took up the cause of the persecuted Hindus. His offence, in the Emperor's eyes, was thus excedingly serious and it is no wonder that he met his death in execution.

But it has been suggested that there was something besides and that the causes of the Guru's execution were not wholly religious. It has been said that Tegh Bahadur was not merely a spiritual leader but a soldier as well and Sarkar goes so far as to assert that he actually fought in the ranks of the Mughal army with a number of followers in connection with Raja Ram Singh's expedition against the Ahom King.[1] Cunningham says : "His repeated injunction that his disciples should obey the bearer of his arrows, show more of the kingly than the priestly spirit."[2] The implication appears to be that Guru Tegh Bahadur had been some sort of a political revolutionary. This view of the matter, we think, arises primarily from what Golam Hussein writes in the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkharin.* He says : "This man (Tegh Bahadur), finding himself at the head of so many thousands of people, became aspiring : and he united his concerns with one Hafyz-aadeem, a Mahomedan fakir.....These two men no sooner saw themselves followed by multitudes, implicitly addicted to their chief's will, than forsaking every honest calling, they fell to subsisting by plunder and rapine, laying waste the whole province of Penjab."[3] Accepting the above statement Cuningham remarks : "Tegh Bahadur followed the example of his father with unequal footsteps, and that, choosing for his haunts the wastes between Hansi and the Sutlej he subsisted himself and his disciples by plunder, in a way, indeed, that rendered him not unpopular with the peasantry."[4] We are told that this is largely corrobrated by some Sikh *Sakhis*[5] and, on the strength of these, Pincott says : "It is certain that Tegh Bahadur spent

1 Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 312.
2 Cunningham, *op. cit* , p. 65.
3 English translation (R. Cambray & Co.), p. 85.
4 Cunningham, *Ibid* , p 64.
5 Their title is : The Travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh, Translated from the Original Gurumukhi by Sardar Attar Singh of Bhadour.

his life in violent antagonism to the Muslim rulers of the country."[1] In the same strain Trumpp writes: "The Guru appears by no means as a humble spiritual instructor, but riding at the front of well-armed disciples, who, if not willingly provided, levied contributions on the Zamindars and the inhabitants of the villages through which they passed, and made predatory incursions on the Muhammadan population. The Guru had not only a strong band of Sikhs with him, but he engaged also some rural clans to enter his service, promising them, that he would pay them handsomely and put them in the way of obtaining booty." He goes on to say that one of the *Sakhis* shows that "the Muhammadan soldiers were at the heels of the Guru, trying to capture him" and from another it can be gathered that it was dangerous to receive the Guru as he was outlawed at that time. Trumpp's conclusion is that "the Muhammadan reports, which ascribe his capture and execution to political reasons, deserve therefore full credit, the Sikh tradition itself confirming by these *Sakhis* the charges brought against him."[2]

It is strange that Trumpp should write about this matter with so much of confidence because he makes no secret of the fact that he was doubtful as to whether the above-mentioned *Sakhis* referred to Guru Tegh Bahadur at all. The more likely probability is that these refer to Tegh Bahadur's son and successor, Guru Gobind Singh, and thus it seems that there is no substance in the contention that Sikh tradition also supports the statements of the *Siyar*. On the contrary we are definitely told

1 Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 593.

2 Trumpp, *op. cit*, p. lxxxix. In a foot-note Trumpp says: "In these *Sakhis* no distinct line is drawn between the wanderings of Guru Tegh Bahadur and those of Guru Gobind Singh, so that it remains uncertain, where the first end and where the second commence". From the internal evidence contained in *Sakhi* 41 where there is direct reference to *Pahul* and the naming of a man as Ghoongna Singh it appears to us clear that it is concerned with Guru Gobind Singh and some of the immediately earlier ones are also very probably of the same character. Thus it is clear that the argument based on these *Sakhis* as to the predatory habits of Guru Tegh Bahadur has no legs to stand upon, as practically all the *Sakhis* on which Pincott and Trumpp rely come after *Sakhi* 41 and undoubtedly refer to Guru Gobind Singh.

that Tegh Bahadur was naturally of a peaceful disposition, that he had lived the life of a recluse prior to his nomination to the Guruship and that he preferred to be called Degh Bahadur instead of Tegh Bahadur.[1] His spirit of forbearance and his love of peace are clearly brought out in the manner in which he sought to meet the intrigues of his kinsmen and those of the *masands*, and his writings unmistakably testify to the saintliness of his character. In the face of all these we find it diffiicult to accept the statements of a writer, who wrote more than a hundred years after the event, and whose story that the Guru was executed as a disturber of the public peace and as an aspirant to power finds no corroboration elsewhere. As Macauliffe says : "...the circumstances related by the Muhammadan writer are utterly incompatible with the whole tenor of Gurn Tegh Bahadur's life and writings, and cannot be accepted as even an approach to history."[2]

We may take it therefore that the Guru fell a victim to religious bigotry and it is understandable why later Muhammdan writers sought to cloud the issue by giving it a political colour. Be that as it may, the Guru's execution undoubtedly strengthened the resistance against the religious policy of Aurangzib and, at the same time, prepared the way for the final stage in the evolution of Sikhism. "In his death the Guru surpassed anything that he had done in life. He was known throughout Upper India, was highly revered by Rajput Princes, and was actually worshipped by the peasantry of the Punjab. His excution was universally regarded by the Hindus as sacrifice for their faith. The whole Punjab began to burn with indignation and revenge."

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 332. *Tegh* means a sword, whereas *deg* means a kitchen.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 392.

Golam Hussein states that under the orders of the Emperor the Governor of Lahore seized both the Guru and the Muhammadan fakir, and while the latter was deported to Afghanistan, the former was confined in the fort of Gwalior. After some time, "there came an order to the Governor of Gwalior to put Tegh-Bahadur to death, to cut his body into four quarters and to hang them at the four gates of the fortress, a sentence which was literally executed." It will be seen that this also goes against the unanimous Sikh tradition that the Guru was executed at Delhi, where the Sishganj Gurdwara has been long standing to commemorate the event.

CHAPTER III

GURU GOBIND SINGH—EARLY ADVENTURES

1. The situation at the death of Guru Tegh Bahadur

Guru Tegh Bahadur left the Sikhs in a precarious position. He had, no doubt, invested his only son Gobind Rai with the insignia of Guruship just before his departure for Delhi, but the new Guru was a boy of nine and the situation in which he was placed was one of unprecedented difficulties. Dissensions within and dangers from without threatened Sikhism alike and it seemed that the infant community had reached a pass from which there was no deliverance. The unique position of the Guru in Sikhism constituted the main source of its strength and distinctiveness and it was primarily on the nucleus supplied by the predominant personality of the Guru that the Sikh organisation had been built up. But ever since the days of Guru Hargobind various circumstances conjointly led to a definite weakening of the Guru's position and prestige, and as the whole organisation moved with the Guru as its pivot, the weakening of the Guru's position could not but lead to wholesale disorganisation and chaos. The weakness of the Guru inevitably strengthened the hands of the *masands* and dissensions at the capital soon raised them up as a great counterpoise to the Guru's authority. They began openly to declare that they could make and unmake Gurus and by their dishonesty and greed were daily bringing the whole movement into disrepute.

The very moment the Guruship acquired temporal adjuncts and became hereditary in a particular family, internal dissensions commenced and rival sects came into existence. The earliest instance of dissent in the history of Sikhism was that of Sri Chand and the *Udasis* but here the difference arose on doctrinal grounds and no temporal issues were involved. It does not also appear that it created any bitterness, for we find that the Sikhs and

the *Udasis* lived on the friendliest of terms. The more important of the other schismatic sects, *viz.*, the Minas and the Ram Rayees, owe their origin to contests for the Guruship, which left a trail of unending bitterness. The Sikh legends say that when Guru Amar Das promised to his daughter, Bibi Bhani, that the Guruship would remain hereditary in her line, he warned her that "she had dammed the clear flowing stream of the Guruship, and consequently great trouble and annoyance shall result."[1] This prophecy was only too literally fulfilled as is clearly shown by the troubles that were caused by the intrigues of Prithia, Dhir Mal and Ram Rai. In one sense the central fact of Guru Arjan's life was the enmity of his brother Prithia, who allied himself with Sulahi Khan, a local revenue officer, complained to the chaudhris of Amritsar, entered into a conspiracy with Chandu, and even approached the Emperor. He was never inactive and gave Guru Arjan no rest. After his death, his son Mihrban continued the intrigues and later on allied himself with the son of Chandu and the Nazim of Lahore. The Guru was thus placed in a position of constant insecurity, and as Narang suggests, Hargobind's own dangerous situation, arising out of the plots of his cousin, might have been one of the most potent reasons that led him to grasp the sword.[2] Similarly, Ram Rai's intrigues against his brother opened to the Emperor the opportunity of interfering in the most vital matter of succession. His residence at Delhi and his ready access to the Emperor gave him the desired opportunity and the Sikh records are unanimous in ascribing all the earlier troubles of Tegh Bahadur primarily to the machinations of Ram Rai at the imperial court. Besides, there were Dhir Mal and the Sodhis and the net result of the intrigues of all these was to drive the Guru into a desperate position and precipitate a conflict between the State and Sikhism.

The first collision occurred, as we have seen, during the days of Guru Hargobind, and, in its immediate effects, it compelled a more definite departure from the ideals that guided the early Sikh Gurus. The exigencies of his situation led Hargobind

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 144.

2 Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

to admit certain elements into the fold of Sikhism and let loose certain latent forces which it became increasingly difficult to reconcile with the ideals of a religious system and which made a reversion to the earliar path of Sikh history impossible. And soon events happened which provided additional reasons for perpetuating the newer adjuncts in a more accentuated form. The traditional policy of the Mughal Empire was suddenly reversed. By his wanton persecution and his deliberate suppression of the religion of the 'infidels' Aurangzib raised a whirlwind throughout the Empire and the Sikhs could not remain unaffected. Their agents were driven out from the cities, their temples were ordered to be demolished and their holy places desecrated. The climax came when their Guru, whose only fault in their eyes was was his staunch adherence to his own faith, was publicly executed. Sikhism was thus threatened with extinction, root and branch, and though it has been said that Sikhs would have been left alone if they reverted to their earlier path and relapsed into a purely religious community of quietists,[1] it is clear that the past history of Sikhism and the character of his votaries made that impossible and there remained no other method of self-defence except the aid of arms.

Moreover, as has been shown elsewhere,[2] the Sikhs had, by no means, got rid of their caste and tribal predilections. Their solidarity was often cut through by matrimonial alliances outside the community and tribal consciousness often gained the better of the injunction of Sikhism. Still there were many things in Sikhism that were noble and great and of these none so magnificent as the selfless devotion to the Guru and the intense feeling of brotherhood. It has been shown elsewhere to what extent a Sikh could go for his Guru or a brother Sikh and the martial instinct inherent in the Jat only required discipline and direction to achieve wonders. The problem, therefore, was that in course of its development Sikhism had acquired certain adjuncts which it could neither completely assimilate nor entirely discard. A

1 *Hakikat*, English translation by I. Banerjee, *Indian Historical Quarterly*. March, 1942.

2 *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I. Appendix A.

purely religious movement had gradually acquired certain accretions which were distinctly of a socio-political character. External dangers and the character of the Sikhs themselves demanded further development. On the other hand, there was hopeless disintegration within and, side by side, the wherewithal to build a new unity. The future of Sikhism, therefore, depended on how these contradictory forces were synthesised under the banner of a common ideal and how uniformity was secured within the system itself in order to better assure the cohesion of the secular movement that was to be based upon it.

II. Retirement to Nahan and the battle of Bhangani

The immediate problem for the new Guru, however, was to save himself from the wrath of the Emperor. It was too much to expect that Aurangzib's hostility would cease with the death of Teg Bahadur and the Sikh records tell us that although a mere boy, the Guru soon revived the policy of his grandfather. He soon collected an army and constructed a big drum to complete his equipment. And like his grandfather Hargobind he caused it to be publicly known that he would be grateful to all who brought him arms and horses and it is said that his appeal met with a ready response. It thus appears that the policy of armed resistance, which had been almost wholly abandoned by the successors of Guru Hargobind, again became predominant under Guru Gobind Singh. But these measures for self-defence were evidently considered inadequate and the Guru soon retired farther into the hills and took up his residence at Paunta, situated in the territories of the Raja of Nahan.

In the *Bachitra Natak* the Guru informs us that when he obtained sovereignty he promoted religion to the best of his ability. But afterwards he left that country and proceeded to Paunta, where he enjoyed himself on the bank of the Kalindri (Jumna) in amusments of various kinds, particularly in hunting various sorts of game in the forest. But Fateh Shah, the Raja, became angry with him and came to blows with him without any reason.[1] This is all that the Guru tells us of his

1 *Bachitra Natak*, Vol. III, 1-3.

retirement to Nahan and of the conflict with Fateh Shah, known as the battle of Bhangani.

Evidently there are gaps in this scrappy account and we would forthwith proceed to fill them in with the aid of the more detailed Sikh records. These latter almost unanimously tell us that after his father's death the Guru continued to stay at Makhowal. He soon collected an army and busily strengthened his resources when suddenly quarrel broke out with Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur. We are told that Raja Bhim Chand became very eager to dispossess the Guru of some valuable presents from his disciples, a trained elephant and a magnificent tent among others. Their relation became more and more strained and at last both resolved to appeal to arms. At this crisis, an invitation came from the Raja of Nahan, and the Sikh party opposed to war, mostly composed of *masands*, who had succeeded in convincing the Guru's mother and grandmother of the inexpediency of an immediate war with Bhim Chand, persuaded the Guru to accept the invitation and leave Makhowal alone for some time.

But it appears that the root of the matter went even deeper. The Guru was becoming a menace to the integrity of Bhim Chand's dominions. The beating of a drum was regarded as a symbol of sovereignty in those days. The Guru, it is stated, had constructed a big drum and beat it regularly at Makhowal. The Guru's followers sometimes ravaged the villages by force. Therefore it is no wonder that Bhim Chand became somewhat nervous and consulted some of his brother chieftains, Raja Kripal of Katoon among others, as to the course he should pursue. It was decided that the question should be finally settled as soon as the impending marriage of Bhim Chand's son with the daughter of Fateh Shah of Srinagar was over and Fateh Shah himself had been consulted about it. In the meantime the Guru had retired to Paunta and became a great friend of Fateh Shah by amicably settling the disputes between him and the Raja of Nahan. The Guru brought the two Rajas in open court and caused them to embrace each other and promise eternal friendship. Naturally when the wedding of Fateh Shah's daughter

was celebrated soon after, the Guru sent rich presents through his Dewan, Nand Chand. But difficulties were immediately raised by Bhim Chand about the acceptance of the Guru's presents and he openly threatened his new relation that he would cut off all connection with him if he accepted presents from his avowed enemy. Many of the Rajas had assembled at Srinagar on that occasion and they also seem to have supported Bhim Chand in his resolution. The social obligations to a daughter's father-in-law compelled Fateh Shah to cast all other considerations to the winds and it was decided that the Guru should be immediately attacked. Fateh Shah was even constrained to take the lead of the allied army.

But there are obvious difficulties in the way of our accepting this story as history. According to this version, the Guru's stay in Nahan territory must have been nominal, for he left Makhowal when the marriage of Bhim Chand's son with the daughter of Fateh Shah was impending and he came back immediately after the battle of Bhangani, which was fought as soon as the wedding ceremony was over. The Sikh writers state that, when the Guru had definitely refused to hand over the trained elephant to Bhim Chand, the latter asked for a temporary loan of the animal on the occasion of his son's marriage. Thus it would appear that even when Bhim Chand was making preparations to proceed to Srinagar to celebrate his son's wedding the Guru was still at Makhowal. From the Guru's own account as well as from the other Sikh records we learn that he returned to Kahlur territory immediately after the battle of Bhangani. Therefore the Guru must have stayed in Nahan territory for a very short time. But the relics of the Guru's fort at Paunta and Nahan tradition leave no room for doubt that the Guru's stay there was somewhat prolonged. The *Sirmur Gazetteer* states that Guru Gobind Singh lived at Paunta for about five years[1] and the Guru's own statment seems to

1 *Sirmur Gazetteer*, p. 51. It is, however, stated on p. 112 that the Guru resided at Paunta for about 3 years. At any rate, the Guru's stay must have been rather protracted.

indicate that he had not remained long at Makhowal after his father's death.

Indeed, it seems almost certain that there has been a confusion in the later Sikh records and possibly their ignorance of the real causes of the battle of Bhangani led them to make two things appear as cause and effect, which originally had no connection. The main cause of the Guru's retirement to Nahan might have been, as the Sikh records suggest, the enmity of Bhim Chand of Bilaspur, but that the same ill-will of Bhim Chand was solely responsible for bringing about the battle of Bhangani almost immediately afterwards, is more than what we can accept. We have already pointed out that this would make the Guru's stay in Nahan purely nominal, while we have very good reasons to believe that he made a somewhat protracted stay at Paunta. Moreover, It is very important to notice that the Guru himself informs us that immediately after the battle of Bhangani he went to Kahlur (Bilaspur) and there established the village of Anandpur.[1] Taken literally, the Guru's words mean that it was only after the battle of Bhangani that Anandpur was established as his headquarters. If we regard Makhowal and Anandpur as identical the Guru's statement may not be literally true but it clearly indicates that the Guru's earlier stay at Anandpur-Makhowal was purely nominal and that it was made the real centre of his activities after the battle of Bhangani.

It seems that in spite of its apparent confusion in some respects Forster's statment is the nearest approach to the truth of the matter. He says : "The intelligence of his father's death and dread of a like fate had induced him to fly from Paunta whence he retired after a series of various adventures into the territory of Sriningnaghur" and "afterwards proceeded with his adherents to the Punjab, where he was hospitably received by a marauding Hindu chief of that quarter, who gave him the

1 *Bachitra Natak*, VIII, 36. "Anandpur is situated close to Makhowal. The first name was given by Gobind to his own particular residence at Makhowal, as distinguished from the abode of his father." Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

dependencies of Mackoval."[1] It is, no doubt, evident that the Guru could not have fled in the first instance from Paunta because he himself informs us that he had been brought to the Punjab before his father's death, but the rest of Forster's statement agrees, on the whole, very well with what we would get from a literal interpretation of the Guru's own words that it was only after the battle of Bhangani that he went to Kahlur and established the village of Anandpur. At the time of his father's death the Guru was a mere boy and as yet his resources were slender and scanty. The mighty Mughal Governmet had declared itself the open enemy of his faith and the first result of the open breach had been the execution of his father. It is also very probable that the chief in whose territories the Guru resided also raised difficulties about his continuance there as it might involve him in troubles with the Mughal Government and the Guru thought it better to leave the place and retire farther into the hills. There he lived in seclusion for several years but suddenly quarrel broke out with Fateh Shah of Srinagar. The Guru won the battle that followed but still perhaps he did not consider it convenient to remain there any longer. In the meantime circumstances had changed in Kahlur. Bhim Chand was now meditating rebellion against the Mughal Government or had actually rebelled. At this crisis he was only too glad to welcome the Guru back to his territories. The Guru, in his turn, readily consented and coming to Kahlur founded the village of Anandpur, which henceforward became the centre of his activities.

What has been said above seems most in accordance with the probabilities of the case. At any rate, the evidence of the *Bachitra Natak*, practically the only reliable authority on the point, supports this view more than any other. It is, no doubt, unsafe to place too much reliance on negative evidence but it is significant that the Guru nowhere mentions Bhim Chand in connection with the battle of Bhangani and it seems improbable that he would so readily return to Kahlur if, as the Sikh writers

1 Forster, *Travejs*, p. 261.

suggest, the Guru's original quarrel with Bhim Chand was the main or in fact the only reason that brought him into collision with Fateh Shah. Moreover, the story that the Guru passed the first twenty years of his pontificate in seclusion in the hills is, no doubt, in some respects, contrary to all evidence; but it seems to us than the story of this early retirement was mixed up with the Guru's temporary obscurity in the hills on the eve of his convening the assembly at Keshgrah and became the foundation of the myth.

We would now proceed direct to the battle of Bhangani. The Guru's own account does not help us much in understanding the causes of the conflict. As we have seen, he merely says that Fateh Shah came to blows with him without any reason. It has also been pointed out that the reason, which the various other Sikh records suggest, is hardly acceptable. We have thus practically no direct evidence to work upon. However, from the Guru's description of the battle it appears that some of the Hill chiefs had made an alliance against him. The chiefs of Dadhwar and Jaswal,[1] Gaji Chand of Chandel,[2] and Gopal[3] and Hari Chand[4] fought on the side of Fateh Shah. The later Sikh records[5] add the names of some other chiefs who joined Fateh Shah or at least participated in the consultations that preceded the battle. Thus it seems that, for some reason or other, the Guru had seriously alarmed the Hill chieftains. Cunningham says that the Guru "seems to have endeavoured to mix himself up with the affairs of the half-independent chiefs, and to obtain a commanding influence over them, so as by degrees to establish a virtual principality amid mountain fastness to serve as the basis of his operations against the Mughal Government."[6] Though it is doubtful whether the views of the Guru had as yet advanced to this extent, there are indications in the Sikh

1 *Bachitra Natak*, VIII. 20.
2 *Ibid.*, VIII. 21.
3 *Ibid.*, VIII, 11.
4 *Ibid.*, VIII, 12, 13, 15, 21, 26, 29, 33.
5 *Gur Bilas*, IV, 96, 156. *Panth Prakash*, XXXIII, 16.
6 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

records that he wanted to mix himself up with the affairs of the Hill chieftains. But Guru Gobind's policy in the hills proved a conspicuous failure. The Kangra Hills are that portion of the Punjab which is most essentially Hindu. It has been said that "one is almost tempted to believe that the type of Hindu society still found in this tract preserves an even more archaic organisation than anything described by Manu."[1] There had never been any long-sustained Muslim domination and the chiefs who ruled over "the most ancient principalities of northern India" were naturally resentful of any external influence. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that the Hill chiefs would look upon the Guru as an upstart. He represented a faith which inculcated liberal ideas, and most of his followers were Jats, whom the Rajputs looked down upon as persons of inferior breed. Thus political privilege, social exclusiveness and tribal pride—all combined to induce the Hill chiefs to present a united front against the Guru. This explains why the Guru never succeeded in maintaining a lasting alliance with the Hill chiefs and why Sikhism never made any headway in the hills.

But the immediate cause of the Guru's quarrel with Fateh Shah must have been more direct. The Guru's army was, as yet, something of a rabble and a Pathan commander in the Guru's army is said to have observed: "The Guru's main dependence is on us. The rest of his army is a miscellaneous rabble who have never seen war, and will run away when they hear the first shot fired." This was certainly a misreprsentation of the Guru's resources as was finally demonstrated in the field of Bhangani, but that some at least had joined the Guru merely for the sake of booty and did not stand by him when the crisis came is clearly proved by the Guru's own statement that after the establishment of Anandpur he drove out all those who had not joined in the battle.[2] Even after this, desertions at critical moments were, by no means, rare[3] and it thus appears that there was a party in the Guru's camp who cared little for

1 Macauliffe, *op, cit.*, Vol. V, p. 30.
2 *Bachitra Natak*, VIII, 37, 38.
3 *Ibid.*, X, 1 ; XIII, 2.

his cause and who had joined him merely for the sake of personal profit. Perhaps these were the people who were primarily responsible for these repeated outrages on the subjects of the Hill chiefs, of which we get many indications in the Sikh records.[1] These generally took the form of taking supplies forcibly from the villagers and explain, to a large extent, the irritation and nervousness of the Hill chieftains and their subjects. Indeed, the marauding instinct was characteristic of the Jats, who formed the bulk of the Guru's followers and whom, it seems, the influence of Sikhism never completely chastened. Here we possibly get the clue to one of the reasons that might have inspired the combination against the Guru. And Fateh Shah, particularly, had perhaps a special cause of grievance. The Sikh records state that Medini Prakas of Nahan and Fateh Shah of Srinagar had been constantly engaged in border warfare but after his retirement to Paunta the Guru had brought the two chiefs together and amicably settled their disputes. But it seems that the settlement did not prove lasting and, as the Guru was a great friend of the Nahan chief and had taken up his abode in his territories,[3] it may not be improbable that he somehow became involved in the traditional boundary disputes between the two States.

But however uncertain our position might be with regard to the causes of the quarrel, so far as the battle itself is concerned, we stand on much surer ground. The Guru's own description might be animated and more calculated to inflame the courage of his followers than to convey correct information of actual

1 *Bachitra Natak*, IX, 24. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 49, 50.

2 Macauliffe *ibid.*, p. 18,

3 The Guru established his residence at Paunta, which is situated on the banks of the Jumna, 26 miles from Nahan. There is a *Gurdwara* here and the ruins of the fort built by the Guru still exist. Some say that the name 'Paunta' is derived from the fact that the Guru first halted (fixed his *paw feet*) here after his departure from Makhowal. The *Sirmur Gazetteer*, however, states that the Guru first halted at Toka, where the spot is marked by a *Gurdwara*, 'though it only consists of a small platform near a wall.' Thence he was brought to Nahan by the Raja and afterwards proceeded to Paunta. (*Sirmur Gazetteer*, pp. 15, 51. Macauliffe, *ibid.*, pp. 16, 17. *Gur Bilas*, VI, 19-21).

events, but the main facts appear clearly enough. The opposing forces met on the field of Bhangani which stand about 6 miles distant from Paunta on the plain between the Jumna and the Giri, not far from the city of Rajpura on the Mans-suri (Mussoorie) road.[2] The battle commenced with great vehemence and immediately the five sons of Bibi Viro,[3] the only daughter of Guru Hargobind, organised an attack which was nobly backed up by the Brahman Dayaram, Dewan Chand, and the two Kripals, one, the Guru's uncle and the other, an *Udasi Mahant*. The brunt of the attack seems to have fallen, in the first instance, on those Pathan mercenaries who had been in the Guru's pay but had mutinied and joined the Hill chiefs just on the eve of the battle. We are told that of their four leaders, Hayat Khan, Najabet Khan, Bhikhan Khan and Kale Khan, the last alone remained true to the Guru "with troops of one hundred men of which he had been originally in command."[4] It appears that early in the battle Hayat Khan was killed by the *Mahant* Kripal,[5] but the others fought on and the action continued with great determination on both sides. After some time Raja Gopal and Hari Chand[6] became prominent in attack and for some time

1 Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 54.

2 Macauliffe, *op. cit-*, Vol. V, p. 29. *Gur Bilas*, VI, 250, 251.

The *Sirmur Gazetteer* states (p. 15) that both Hari Chand and Fateh Shah fell in the battle. "The Ranis of both the leaders became *sati* and their eight tombs are still shown at Bhangani. The Sikh records, however, tell us that Fateh Shah had fled when he found his cause hopeless. A *gurdwara* still commemorates the Guru's victory."

3 These were Sangu Shah, Jit Mal, Gopal Chand, Gangaram and Maheri Chand. The Guru is said to have called Sangu Shah by the name of Sri Shah because of his great military skill. Macauliffe (*ibid*., p. 43) says that after his glorious death on the field of Bhangani the Guru changed his name to Shah Sangram (Lord of Battle). See also *Gur Bilas*, VI, 247.

4 Macauliffe, *ibid*, pp. 30-33. The Guru, however, does not say anything about Kale Khan.

5 *Bachitra Natak*, VIII, 7.

6 Possibly Gopal is the same Raja Gopal of Guler who is the hero of the XIth section of the *Bachitra Natak*. The *Gur Bilas* (VI, 156) and the *Panth Prakas* (XXIII, 16) definitely connect the two. The later Sikh records state unanimously that Hari Chand was the Raja of Nalgarh (Handur) though in the Guru's account there appears nothing that would justify us in connecting him with Nalgarh. But that cannot mean much

the Guru's prospects looked very dark.[1] At this crisis Jit Mal came to the rescue of his side. With his spear he struck Hari Chand who fell down senseless and had to be carried off the field.[2] This seems to have immediately relieved the pressure and the Guru's party again became aggressive. The Pathan leaders maintained a determined resistance but the Rajas of Jaswar and Dadhwar, who had hitherto been fighting with zeal left the field with all their troops and Raji Chand of Chandel stood exhausted and perplexed.[3] A general rout of the allies was about to commence but at this juncture Hari Chand rose from his swoon and became immediately alive to the duties of a leader.[4] The allies again rallied and the last phase of the battle commenced. A great fight began between Sri Shah on the one hand and Najabet Khan on the other, and many soldiers on both sides were killed. After some time both the leaders fell[5] and the Guru, who had as yet taken no actual part in the

because the Guru's account is always scrappy and in some places hardly intelligible without the assistance of the more detailed Sikh records. The Guru generally describes him as the simple Hari Chand without the appellation of Raja and the only place where he hints that Hari Chand is a chief is verse 33, where he is called "*Karor Rayan*". Macauliffe translates "*Karor Rayan*" as "the chief of Karor" (Vol V, p. 44) but contradictorily makes Hari Chand "the chief of Handur" in his general biography of the Guru (Vol. V, p. 41). But as we nowhere find it mentioned that a chief of Karor had anything to do with Guru Gobind Singh, we think that Bhai Bishen Singh Gyani is right In interpreting "*karor*" as "the owner of a crore" or a multi-millionairie. (Annotated edition of the *Bachitra Natak* p. 211). Hari Chand then was a rich and powerful chief but there are difficulties in the way of our accepting the statement that he was the Raja of Handur. The *Nalgarh Gazetteer* states that an able and just ruler named Dharm Chand ruled in Nalgarh for no less than 83 years, from 1618 to 1701, and was succeeded by his eldest son Himmat Chand (*Simla Hill States Gazetteer, Nalgarh*, p. 60). In the long list of Rajas we do not find the name, Hari Chand, mentioned even once. On the other hand, tbe Sikh records are all very positive in connecting Hari Chand with Nalgarh. Hari Chand thus might have been a younger son who had been sent by his father to assist Fateh Khan, the chief himself being too old to join personally.

1 *Bachitra Natak*, VIII, 11-13.
2 *Ibid.*, VIII, 15.
3 *Ibid.*, VIII, 20, 21.
4 *Ibid.*, VIII, 21.
5 *Ibid.*, VIII, 23.

fray, now personally undertook the direction of affairs.[1] In his second attempt the Guru struck Bhikhan Khan in his face and the latter fled precipitately leaving the horse behind, which was immediately killed.[2] Now began the great duel between the Guru and Hari Chand who fought with great skill and dash and sent hundreds to the other world.[3] The Guru says : "Hari Chand in his rage drew forth his arrow. He struck my steed with one and then discharged another at me but God preserved me and it only grazed my ear in its flight. His third arrow penetrated the buckle of my waist-belt and reached my body but wounded me not. It is only God who protected me knowing me his servant. When I felt the touch of the arrow my anger was kindled. I took up my bow and began to discharge arrows in abundance. Upon this my adversaries began to flee. I took aim and killed the young chief, Hari Chand."[4] The death of Hari Chand was the signal for a disorderly retreat on the part of the hillmen and the Guru's victory was complete.[5]

III. The battle of Nadaun

As we have said before, after the victory of Bhangani the Guru did not remain at Paunta but came to Kahlur where he founded the village of Anandpur. Many days passed and the Guru "fostered the faithful and rooted out all the wicked."[6] Those who had kept themselves away from the field of Bhangani were driven out of the place and the Guru thus seems to have busily engaged himself in putting his house in order. He was

1 *Bachitra Natak*, VIII, 24.
2 *Ibid.*, VIII, 25.
3 *Ibid.*, VIII, 26-28.
4 *Ibid.*, VIII, 29-33. (Macauliffe's translation, Vol. V, p. 44).
5 Narang states that Syed Budhoo Shah, the Chief of Sadhowra, at whose recommendation the Guru had taken the Afghans into his service, hearing of their desertion, hastened to the Guru's help with a force of two thousand men and with this timely aid the Guru obtained a complete victory over the allied Rajas (*op. cit.*, p. 153). The story is given in the *Panth Prakash* (XXIII, 11-16). It is stated that Budhoo Shah sent two of his sons with one thousand soldiers. But as nothing of this occurs in the *Bachitra Natak* or the *Gur Bilas* we have not incorporated it in our account of the battle.
6 *Bachitra Natak*, VIII, 38.

now apparently living on friendly terms with Bhim Chand of Kahlur and the occasion soon came when the Guru was called upon to give a practical demonstration of his friendship.

Narang states that the battle of Bhangani made a great impression upon the Hill chiefs and they now began to regard the Guru's propaganda with the seriousness it deserved, The Rajas hastened to make an offensive and defensive alliance with him, and supported by the Guru, at once took up the course of passive resistance and refused to send up their yearly tribute to the imperial exchequer. An army was sent against the Rajas by the Mughal Government to realise the arrears and a bloody battle was fought near Nadaun in which the Rajas, with the help of the Khalsa, inflicted a severe defeat on the imperial troops.[1] But it must be pointed out here that there is no evidence for such a general statement. The Khalsa had not yet come into existence and the battle of Nadaun was not won by the united efforts of the Hill chiefs, backed up by the forces of the Guru. The account given in the *Bachitra Natak* is, no doubt, involved, and it often becomes difficult to understand to which party a particular chief belonged, but it is certain that at least Raja Kripal of Kangra and Raja Dayal of Bijharwal fought on the side of the Mahammadan general, and there is suggestion anywhere that the defection of the Rajas had any connection with the Guru's victory at Bhangani.

The Guru's account begins rather abruptly. He says: "Many days passed in this way till Miyan Khan went to Jammu and sent Alif Khan to Nadaun. Immediately quarrel broke out with Bhim Chand. The Raja called me to assist him in the struggle and I joined his side."[2] Miyan Khan thus seems to have been entrusted with a specific mission and while he himself went to Jammu to settle accounts with the trans-Ravi principalities, he sent his lieutenant Alif Khan eastwards with the object of bringing the Kangra Hill states under subjection. This is confirmed by the *Gur Bilas*,[3] and it thus appears that during

1 Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
2 *Bachitra Natak*, IX, 1.
3 *Gur Bilas*, VII, 30, 31.

Aurangzib's continued absence in the Deccan great administrative irregularities arose in the Punjab and the Hill Rajas took advantage of the situation in withholding payment of tribute. During the period of the Sultanate these Rajas continued to maintain, more or less, practical independence of the Delhi Government, but "with the advent of Mughal ascendancy they were compelled to bow to a foreign yoke." Kangra was conquered by Akbar and soon afterwards the other principalities of the western hills came directly under his control. The fort of Kangra was garrisoned by imperial troops under a Mughal *Faujdar*. Next Todar Mal "annexed a large portion of the Kangra Valley and made a similar demand on each of the other states proportionate to their means." The Emperor's Finance Minister is said to have taken the meat and left the bones, or, in other words, the fertile tracts were all annexed and the Rajas were left only with the bare hills. "To ensure the fidelity of the hill Rajas, Akbar adopted the policy of retaining as hostages at his court a prince from each of the States and we learn that in the beginning of Jahangir's reign there were 22 young princes from the Punjab Hills in attendance on the Emperor." Since the conquest by Akbar the Hill chiefs were tributary to the Mughal Empire and it appears that they were liberally treated. They were left much to themselves in the government of their principalities and were allowed to exercise the functions and wield the power of independent sovereigns. In spite of one or two isolated instances of rebellion, the Hill Rajas, on the whole, seem to have continued in friendship with the imperial court as is proved by the letters and valuable presents received from the Emperors and still in the possession of many of the old ruling families. On the whole, the Mughal rule sat very lightly on the Rajas and some of the chiefs gained a high place in the imperial favour and were given *mansab* or military rank in the Mughal army and advanced to important offices in the administration.[1] The inducement must have been very great for these

1 See the admirable article on the "Mian," a superior class of Hill Rajputs, by Dr. J. Hutchison of the Chamba Mission (Rose *op. cit.*, Vol. III).

rulers to rise in rebellion against the Mughal Government and it seems hardly likely that the Guru's propaganda was the only or the sole cause of it, particularly as disaffection seems to have spread even among the States of the Dogra Circle on the western side of the Ravi. As Macauliffe suggests,[1] it appears more probable that a general laxity in the administration encouraged the Hill chiefs to stop payment of tribute, though there cannot be any doubt that the Guru played a very important part in the later developments, as we find that the first expedition sent by Dilawar Khan and possibly also the second were directed specifically against him.

The Sikh records state that Alif Khan, in the first instance, addressed himself to Raja Kripal of Kangra. The latter submitted readily and also perhaps persuaded Raja Dayal of Bijharwal to pay tribute to Alif Khan. Kripal then suggested to Alif Khan that Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur was the greatest of all the allied Hill chiefs. Were he first to pay tribute, all the rest would follow his example, and then there would be no necessity for warfare. Acting on this suggestion Alif Khan sent an envoy to Bhim Chand, but the latter refused to pay tribute and prepared for war.

Raja Kripal did not exaggerate when he said that Bhim Chand was the greatest of all the allied chiefs. Even when a mere boy of fourteen, he successfully defended his throne against a powerful pretender over whom he gained a signal victory, "the first of a brilliant series of successes in the field of arms." He afterwards defeated the Rajas of Bashahr, Mandi and Kotkhai,[2] and it is, therefore, just in the fitness of things that we should find him at the head of the allied combination against Alif Khan, though the crowning achievement of his life was yet to come. From the Guru's account we learn that the combination included, besides Bhim Chand and the Guru himself, Raja Sukhdev of Jasrot, Prithi Chand of Madhwar, and two other powerful

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 51. *Gur Bilas.* VII, 31-37.

2 *Simla Hill States Gazetteer, Bilaspur.* p. 6.

chiefs, named Ram Singh and Raj Singh.[1] Bhim Chand did not wait to be attacket but immediately advanced to give battle to Alif Khan, who had taken his position near Nadaun,[2] a petty town on the left bank of the Beas, 20 miles south-east of the Kangra town. The Muhammadan general, together with Raja Kripal of Katoch and Raja Dayal of Bijharwal, was encamped on an eminence and had, therefore, superiority of position.[3] The Guru's description of the battle is rather confused and it is not easy to understand the various phases and developments. It appears that the action commenced with an attack of Raja Kripal Chand but it was driven back and then Bhim Chand organised another offensive on a bigger scale. All the allied chiefs, as well as the Guru, were called upon to participate in the attack, Bhim Chand himself leading "invoking the name of Hanuman in his mouth."[4] Kripal fought with great determination and bravery and exhibited the true virtues of a Rajput.[5] But the others fought desperately and soon troops of Katoch were surrounded on all sides. The people of the tribes of Nanglu, Panglu, Jaswar and Guler advanced in order, and on

1 *Bachitra Natak*, IX, 3-4.

The Guru does not tell us wherefrom Raj Singh and Ram Singh came. This Ram Singh was very probably the same person whom we find in alliance with Raja Gopal of Guler on the occasion of Hussain Khan's expedition. The *Gur Bilas* states that he was the Raja of Jaswal (VII, 43), while according to Macauliffe, the Raja of Jaswal, no doubt, assisted Bhim Chand on the occasion but his name was Kesari Chand (*op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 51-52). However, all our records tell us that Raja Gopal in his struggle with Hussain Khan had only one powerful chief as his ally, whose name, according to the Guru, was Ram Singh. The Guru also informs us that on the side of Raja Gopal of Guler, the Raja of Jaswal fought with great determination (*Bachitra Natak*, XI, 33). Ram Singh, therefore, was none other than the Raja of Jaswal and it seems that Macauliffe is wrong (See also *Gur Bilas*, VII, 90).

2 *Kangra District Gazetteer*, p. 258. In later days it became a favourite place of residence of Raja Sansar Chand who built himself a place at Amtar on the river bank, one mile from the town, where he held his court during summer.

3 *Bachitra Natak*, IX, 2.
4 *Ibid.*, IX, 6.
5 *Ibid*, IX, 8—14.

the other side, Raja Dayal of Bijharwal defended mightily.[1] At this stage the Guru himself entered into the fray and his own part in the battle he thus describes: "Then this insignificant creature took up his gun and aimed at one of the Rajas. The Raja reeled and fell upon the ground, so unerringly was the shot directed, but even then the angry chief thundered. I then threw off the gun and took up arrows in my hand. I drew out four and discharged all of them. Then again I took three others and discharged them with my left hand, (though) whether they struck anybody or not I do not know. Then the almighty God hastened the end of the fight and the enemy were driven out into the river."[2] Alif Khan fled precipitately and Bhim Chand and his allies were completely victorious.

The Guru states that after the victory he encamped on the side of the river and remained there for eight days. He visited the palaces of the various Rajas and then took his leave. The two parties came to terms and the Guru, on his part, returned to Anandpur after having plundered the village of Alsun on his way.[3] We are thus introduced to two very interesting questions, *viz.*, the reconciliation between the two parties and the plunder of the village of Aslun. The later Sikh records tell us nothing about the first and therefore we are left to mere guess-work. Whether Alif Khan also was a party in the negotiations or merely the Hill chiefs of the two sides came to an understanding among themelves, it is difficult to say. Very soon afterwards we find that Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur gave up his attitude of defiance, and it is significant that Raja Gopal of Guler and his

1 *Bachitra Natak*, IX, 16. Thus it appears that Guler also supported Bhim Chand and this is confirmed by the *Gur Bilas* (VII, 41), It seems to us, however, that the Guru is here referring to the clans of Jaswal and Guleria and not to the states of those names. Jaswal and Guleria form two of the six principal Katoch clans and gave their names to the states of those names. The Nanglu is "a sept of Rajputs, descended from Chuha Mian, son of Sangar Chand, 6th Raja of Kahlur." (Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 156). Possibly the Panglu also is another Rajput sept of the type.

2 *Bachitra Natak*, IX, 17-19.

3 *Ibid.*, IX, 22-24.

ally Ram Singh, who subsequently distinguished themselves in their struggle against Hussain Khan, were at first willing to come to terms by the payment of tribute. It may not be improbable that in spite of their initial success at Nadaun the Rajas became convinced of the futility of prolonging the conflict and came to an understanding among themselves that they would make their submission, though, as we shall see later on, the demands of the Mughal Government proved too much for the scanty resources of some of the Hill chiefs, and the excesses of the Muhammadan general, Hussain Khan, compelled them to continue the desperate game of defiance. In that case we would perhaps be justified in regarding the plunder of Alsun as an act of retaliation on the part of the Guru, for he might very well regard the understanding referred to above as a desertion of himself. Macauliffe says that the village of Alsun was situated within the territories of Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur but he gives a somewhat garbled version of the plunder. We are told that the inhabitants refused to sell supplies to the Guru's troops and at last the Guru was compelled to order his followers that supplies be forcibly taken at current rates.[1] As far as we are aware, there is no authority for this statement and the evidence of the more important records[2] leaves no room for doubt that the entire village was looted.

IV. The expeditions sent by Dilawar Khan

The Guru had thus openly joined the standard of rebellion and inextricably compromised himself in the eyes of the Mughal Government. The position thus became somewhat curious. Some of the Rajas had stopped payment of tribute, and when the Mughal Government sent an army to enforce its demands, the Rajas took up arms and asked the Guru to help them, which he did. A brilliant victory for the allies followed but still the Rajas decided to abandon their position and very probably came

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 54.

2 *Bachitra Natak*, IX, 24. *Gur Bilas*, VII, 70. *Panth Prakas*, XXXIV, 7, *Gur Sobha*, III, 11.

to an understanding among themselves that they would make their submission. This is, perhaps, the only way in which we can possibly interpret the Guru's words about the treaty already referred to.[1] We need not be surprised, therefore, that the next expedition was sent specifically against the Guru himself and it shows clearly that the Guru had been playing a very important part in this affair, though we find it difficult to believe that his propaganda and encouragement were the sole or even the primary cause of the widespread disaffection of the Hill chiefs, both of the Dogra and the Jalandhar circles.[2]

The Guru informs us that after the battle of Nadaun many days passed during which he was again engaged in hunting out the apostates.[3] But he was not allowed to remain long in this manner as Dilawar Khan sent his son against him. It is difficult to say who this Dilawar Khan was. The Guru himself gives us no hint and there is no unanimity among the other Sikh records. Narang says that he was the Governor of Kangra.[4] The *Panth Prakas* says that he was the *Subahdar* of Lahore.[5] Bhai Sukha Singh merely states that he was a Muhammadan chief[6] and Macauliffe says that he was a semi-independent local chieftain "who had attained power in the Punjab during the insurrection which arose while Aurangzib was employed in the Dakhan."[7] To us, however, it seems more probable that he was

1 *Bachitra Natak*, IX, 23. The Guru says: "Then I took leave of the Rajas and returned home and they proceeded in the other direction to negotiate for reconciliation. The two parties came to terms and therefore the story ends."

2 "It is a popular saying that between the Sutlej and the Chenab there are twenty-two principalities, eleven on either side of the Ravi." The cluster of states between the Chenab and the Ravi is termed the Dogra Circle, while that between the Ravi and the Sutlej is known as the Jalandhar Circle. (*Kangra District Gazetteer*, p. 24). We have already seen that Sukhdev of Jasrot, a state belonging to the Dogra Circle, assisted Bhim Chand in the battle of Nadaun and the fact that Miyan Khan himself went towards Jammu leaves little room for doubt that the rebellion was widespread.

3 *Bachitra Natak*, X, 1.
4 Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 154,
5 *Panth Prakas*, XXIV. 8.
6 *Gur Bilas*, VII, 75.
7 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 55.

an official of the Mughal Government. A close study of the *Bachitra Natak* clearly reveals the fact that the expeditions form, as it were, so many links in a single chain. It has been seen that Miyan Khan had been, in the first instance, entrusted with that task of subduing the Hill Rajas and he had sent Alif Khan eastwards while he himself proceeded towards Jammu. Alif Khan failed and next came the son of Dilawar Khan. He, too, returned without achieving anything, and then followed the expeditions under Hussain Khan and Jujhar Singh, two of the generals of Dilawar Khan. These also were defeated and killed and when the news of these repeated disasters reached Aurangzib, he became very angry and sent one of his own sons to the Punjab to set matters right. Thus it is clear that a regular and systematic campaign was being carried on against the Hill Rajas and it is very likely that it was engineered either by the Viceroy of Lahore or by the Viceroy of Kashmir.

Now the son of this Dilawar Khan, whoever he might have been, made an attack upon the Guru but to no purpose. His object seems to have been to surprise Anandpur and, with that end in view, he assembled his troops at about midnight and prepared for attack.[1] When the Muhammadan army reached the bank of the river, the Guru was awakened by an attendant[2] and immediately the sound of alarm was raised. The Guru's soldiers hastily armed themselves but the *Khanzada's* army gave up the struggle even before it was actually commenced. The Guru says : "The river wore a dreadful appearance and the soldiers suffered terribly from cold. From this side my heroes thundered and the bloody Khans fled with their weapons unused."[3] It appears that there was heavy rain and the neighbouring ravine was overflooded.[4] This proved too much for the *Khanzada* and he had to beat a hasty retreat. The expedition thus signally failed and the Guru informs us that the

1 *Bachitra Natak*, X, 2.
2 *Ibid.*, X. 3.
3 *Ibid.*, X, 6.
4 We are told that the "the grateful Sikhs up to this day call the ravine by the name of the helpful brook." (Narang. *op. cit.*, p. 155).

Muhammadans then vented their wrath on the poor people of Barwa and finally established themselves at Bhallan,[1] which seems to have been a place of some strategic importance. It appears from the Guru's account that with the disastrous end of Hussain Khan's expedition, which followed that of the *Khanzada*, Bhallan slipped away into the hands of the Rajas. Jujhar Singh recaptured it on behalf of Dilawar Khan but was immediately attacked by Gaj Singh. Bhallan witnessed the battle that followed and the Muhammadan party was again driven out.[2]

This discomfiture of the *Khanzada* served only to strengthen the resolution of Dilawar Khan who immediately sent his slave-general Hussain Khan with a stronger army to retrieve the disaster. The subsequent developments make the initial aim of this expedition somewhat obscure, but as we have hinted above, it seems that in this instance too, the objective was the Guru's stronghold at Anandpur. The Guru says that if Hussain Khan had met Raja Gopal of Guler two days later, he would certainly have advanced upon Anandpur, but fortunately destiny "had thrown the apple of discord amidst them."[3] Thus it seems very probable that Hussain Khan was unexpectedly diverted from the main object of his expedition and the failure of his negotiations with Raja Gopal of Guler saved the Guru from what might very well have been a disaster for him.

At first Hussain Khan carried all before him. The Raja of Dadhwal was brought completely under control and his sons were made prisoners. Next Hussian Khan thoroughly looted the *Dun*, nobody being able to withstand him. Food grains were taken by force and then distributed among his own followers. It appears that he was soon joined by Raja Kripal of Katoch and Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur and his depredations continued. About this time Raja Gopal of Guler, together with a powerful chief named Ram Singh, came to meet Hussain Khan, who felt

1 *Bachitra Natak*, X, 9.
2 *Ibid.*, XII, 2.
3 *Ibid.*, XI, 5. The *Gur Sobha* definitely states that the objective was Anandpur (IV, 10).

extremly flattered and became blind in his vanity. He did not even condescend to notice them and "with the Rajas of Katoch and Kahlur at his side, he thought that he was peerless in this world." However, Raja Gopal of Guler and Ram Singh offered him the money that they had brought with them, but the amount fell short of the expectation of Hussain Khan and the offer was rejected. Therefore the two chiefs left Hussain Khan's camp and retired to their own places.[1]

Hussain Khan took this as an unpardonable affront and he became so very angry that he did not pause to consider the question of ways and means but at once ordered the beating of the drum for advance. It appears that Raja Gopal and his men were soon afterwards besieged by Hussain Khan's troops. The investment lasted for some time and at last Raja Gopal had to yield to the clamour of his own men who had been suffering terribly from want of food and drink. A messenger was sent to Hussain Khan with proposals of peace but the slave-general remained as obdurate as ever. "Either give me ten thousand rupees immediately or take death upon your head," said he. The Guru had, in the meantime, sent a follower of his named Sangatia, possibly to assist Raja Gopal in his difficulties, and it was mainly through his good offices that the Guleria chief could be persuaded to go over to the enemy's camp under solemn assurances of personal safey. But the negotiations again broke down and then Raja Kripal thought within himself, "Such an opportunity will never come again ; time, in its circle, deceives everybody. Gopal must immediately be disposed of ; either he must be made a prisoner or be killed." But before this evil design could be carried out Raja Gopal got scent of what was going on and fled to his own men. No other alternative was now left but an open trial of strength.[2]

And the battle that followed was the bloodiest of the series. Raja Gopal and his ally fought with the courage of desperation, and as it often happens in such cases, they gained a complete

1 *Bachitra Natak*, XI, 2-9.
2 *Ibid.*, XI, 10-15.

victory in spite of heavy odds. The extreme eagerness of Raja Gopal to come to terms with Hussain Khan clearly shows that he did not think himself equal to the contest but when all attempts at compromise failed, he adopted the counsel of despair and prepared for the worst. It appears that besides the Rajas of Katoch and Kahlur, Hussain Khan was assisted by several officers of whom the most conspicuous was Himmat, as also by a warrior named Hari Singh, of whose identity we know nothing. On the side of Raja Gopal fought Sangatia, Ram Singh and the Raja of Jaswal[2], and the last two, as we have seen, were very probably identical. Of the persons who played a prominent part in the affair, one other remains, *viz.*, the Raja of Chandel,[3] but from the Guru's account it is difficult to determine the party to which he belonged and unfortunately the other Sikh records are silent about him.

The battle seems to have raged with great vehemence and, considering the scale of the operations, it must be said that the carnage that was wrought was appalling. Hussain Khan's defeat was decisive and complete, the leader himself being killed together with Raja Kripal.[4] Himmat also shared the same fate. The Guru states that when the battle was over and the Muhammadan party had left the field, Raja Gopal and his ally gave their attention to the wounded and the dead. Among the wounded they found Himmat, and Ram Singh thus spoke to Raja Gopal, "That Himmat, who has been the root of all these quarrels, has now fallen wounded in our hands." When Gopal heard this, he immediately killed Himmat and did not allow him to get up alive.[5] What happend to the other officers is not quite clear. On the side of Raja Gopal the Guru's emissary named Sangatia was killed with his companions, but the other leaders were all safe.

1 *Bachitra Natak*, XI, 31, 32, 54.
2 *Ibid.*, XI, 33.
3 *Ibid.*, XI, 56,
4 *Ibid* , XI, 52, 65.
5 *Ibid.*, XI, 67, 68.
6 *Ibid*, XI, 57.

Thus the expedition of Hussain Khan, which had begun prosperously, ended in complete disaster, and it seems that for this the rashness of the general was primarily resposilible. The Guru tells us that Hussain Khan had thrown all tactical considerations to the winds.[1] In his blind fury and vanity he became reckless and the price he had to pay was terribly high. The Guru was thus saved from a contingency which might easily prove calamitous and he had every reason to be grateful to the Lord "who saved him by decreeing the din of battle elsewhere."[2] But all was not over yet. Dilawar Khan made still another attempt to retrieve the situation. It seems probable that Raja Gopal's victory had again put heart into the rebellion and the success was followed up by the capture of Bhallan, where the son of Dilawar Khan had entrenched himself after the failure of his expedition against the Guru. The first act of Jujhar Singh, who was now sent by Dilawar Khan, was to recapture Bhallan ;[3] but before he could consolidate his position, he was attacked by Gaj Singh with all his troops and again a bloody battle followed. This time also, the Muhammadan party was routed, both Jujhar Singh and his ally Chandan Raj being killed in the fray.[4] The rebellion of the Rajas thus seemed justified by success but the final story still remains to be told.

1 *Bachitra Natak*, XI, 10.
2 *Ibid.*, XI, 69.
3 *Ibid.*, XII, 2.
4 *Ibid.*, XIII, 10, 12.

From the Guru's account it appears that on the side of Jujhar Singh fought the Raja of Chandel (XII, 45). We are told soon afterwards that when Chandan Rai died, Jujhar Singh alone continued the fight. It may not be improbable, therefore, as Bhai Bishan Singh thinks (*op. cit.*, p. 162), that Chandan Rai was the Raja of Chandel. It sould be noticed, however, that Gaji Chand of Chandel had assisted Fateh Sbah at the battle of Bhangani and if Chandan Rai, too, was the Raja of Chandel, Gaji Chand must have died in the meantime. But we must point out that in the names of the Hill Rajas we always find a good deal of similarity among those belonging to the same family and the names Gaji Chand and Chandan Rai are so very dissimilar that a doubt is naturally raised. It may be that later copyists introduced somo confusion in the Guru's record. We are told that the two heroes on the other side were Gaj Singh and the Raja of Jaswal. Bhai Bishan Singh identifies the two but that is hardly acceptable. Whether there has been some confusion between Gaji Chand and Gaj

V. The advent of the Shahzada

When the news of these repeated disasters reached Aurangzib he clearly realised that something drastic had become absolutely necessary and accordingly sent one of his own sons to restore order in the Punjab Hills.[1] The Prince took up his position at Lahore and sent an officer named Mirza Beg Mughai to reduce the hill tracts. Now began a war of vengeance and the Guru tells us that the first to suffer were those faint-hearted disbelievers, who had been seized with panic at the approach of the Prince and, having unceremoniously left the Guru's protection, taken shelter in the hills with all their treasures.[2] These were mercilessly plundered and those who escaped Mirza Beg were more cruelly dealt with by the four other relentless officers who succeeded him.

But the Guru's main object in introducing this topic seems to have been to read a lesson on apostasy, and we are left entirely in the dark as regards the details of the operations that were carried out under the orders of the Prince in order to bring the Hill chiefs under subjection. The other Sikh records also do not help us much but some facts stand out clearly enough. It is clear that the Guru was not tuched much by the operations of the Prince and that the rebellion of the Rajas was completely crushed. It has been said that "the Rajas were taught a severe lesson by Mirza Beg, the imperial general. He inflicted upon them defeat after defeat, gave up their country to plunder, set fire to villages, took hundreds of prisoners, and in order to make a lesson of them had them shaved clean, and their faces blackened, seated them on donkeys and made an exhibition of them throughout the disturbed area."[3] We, however, find it difficult to accept these details though there cannot possibly be any doubt that the Rajas were taught a aevere lesson

Singh, or between Gaj Singh and Raj Singh, it is difficult to say. The Guru's account seems confused and we are practically helpless because the other Sikh records ignore this incident-

1 *Bachitra Natak*, XIII, 1.
2 *Ibid.*, XIII, 2-4.
3 Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

on this occasion. As far as we are aware, the only record that lends somewhat dubious support to those statements is the *Bachitra Natak*. The Guru describes how the deserters were ruthlessly punished by Mirza Beg and his successors, but there occurs nothing in the verses in question that would entitle us to connect the Hill Rajas themselves with those deserters, though some of their subjects might have been associated with the latter. Moreover, as we have already pointed out, the Guru's object seems to have been to preach "a homily on loyalty to one's spiritual guide," and therefore we need not take his words as literally true, especially as he adopts the traditional Indian way of describsng the shame and ignominy of a merciless punishmeut.

With regard to the other question, viz., the escape of the Guru from the general disaster that must have overtaken the Hili Rajas, the story given in the *Gur Bilas* may perhaps be accepted[1]. We are told that a Khatri of Delhi named Nand Chand, who possessed some influence with the Prince, successfully pleaded on the Guru's behalf and thus it was that although the Guru had played a very important part throughout the rebellion, he was left unmolested, while all the rigours of Mirza Beg and his successors fell upon the unfortunate Hill Rajas. But that the Guru also had to pass through very anxious times is proved by some of his own letters, which have fortunateiy come down to us.[2]

1 *Gur Bilas*, XVI, 171, 172.

One of these letters is to the progenitors of the Phulkian house, in which the Guru asks urgently for assistance. The full text of the letter is given in the *Mahan Kosh* of Bhai Kahn Singh and it is dated *Sambat* 1753 (1696 A.D.). See Appendix B and also Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 224.

In one of his letters written to the Sangat at Dacca the Guru acknowledges the receipt of swords, clothes and money and asks for more; in another he asks for a first class war elephant and in a thlrd "devotees are asked to come for *darshan* fully armed." These letters are unfortunately not dated but there are reasons to believe that they belong to the period we have been speaking of. (See *Dacca Review*, I915, p. 23 : 1919, pp. 316, 318).

CHAPTER IV

GURU GOBIND SINGH—THE REFORMATION

I. The Guru's Mission

We now come to the central climacteric of Guru Gobind Singh's career. His pontificate, we think, may very conveniently be divided into two distinct periods, during each of which he seems to have pursued somewhat different objectives. The convening of the great assembly at Keshgarh in 1699 and the introduction of *pahul* may, for this purpose, be regarded as the diverging point and the two periods may thus be characterised as the pre-Khalsa and post-Khalsa periods. As we have seen, during the pre-Khalsa period the Guru's object seems to have been to enter gradually into the fraternity of the Hill Rajas and establish himself as one of their equals. He completely identified himself with the cause of these chieftains when they rose in rebellion against the Mughal Government, and did all he could to further the common cause. But the differences between the Guru and the Hill Rajas were fundamental and, when the rebellion of the Rajas was finally crushed and they returned to their allegiance to the Mughal Government, the Guru found himself completely isolated. The forbearance of the *Shahzada*, no doubt, gave him a temporary respite but the storm might burst any moment and the Guru had now none to depend on but himself and his followers. He therefore immediately busied himself in putting his house in order and in bringing about a transformation in the ideology of his followers. They were to be fitted to meet the situation with their own unaided strength and the steps that the Guru took to achieve this end brought the Khalsa into existence.

In the *Bachitra Natak*, which was very probably composed near about this time, the Guru himself explains his mission and the objects that he sought to achieve. Much of what the Guru

writes is beyond our purview and belongs, more or less, to the domain of mythology, but it is not difficult to get at the few points that he wants to make out. The Guru gives an account of the origin of the *Sodhi* family to which he belonged and then speaks particularly of himself. He says that he was performing penance on the mountain of Hem Kunt and by his great austerities had become blended with God. But by the Lord's order he had to assume birth though he himself was unwilling to come. The comes a long account of what the Lord had told him about the demons, the gods and the eight *Sakhis*, the *Sidhs*, the *Sadhs* and the *Rikhis* whom He had created in succession. None of these recognised the real essence and each became absorbed in himself. Indeed, "whoever was clever in the world established his own sect and no one found the Creator." Next, the Lord spoke about the prophets but these, too, became wrapped up in themselves, soon forgot to recognise the Supreme Being and utterly failed to fix the True Name in man's heart. Finally, the Lord told the Guru ;

> "I have cherished thee as My son,
> And created thee to extend My religion,
> Go and spread My religion there,
> And restrain the world from senseless acts."[2]

This is the gist of a long story and we think that the only point that is necessary for us to note is that the Guru here directly claims a divine sanction for his mission.

The Guru then givies us the essence of his religion. After communicating to him the secret God had sent him to this world. He was going to tell the world what God had told him and was not prepared to remain silent for fear of mortals. He did not care for religious garbs, matted hair and earrings but would "sow the seed of the Invisible" and would teach men to obtain the Supreme Being by singing the name of the Infinite. He would not care for *any other name* nor establish *any other god* in his heart. He would only meditate on the name of the Endless

1 The story has been given in Vol. I. of the present work, pp. 222. 223.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 296-299.

One, which would remove endless sorrows, and those who meditated on any one else should die of arguments and contentions. Spurious religion was to be regarded as superstition, for God cannot be obtained by hypocrisy, display or mummery ; only "He who keepeth his heart in subjection recognises the Supreme Being." All these are in complete agreement with what had hitherto been regarded as the essentials of Sikhism, but the Guru strikes an entirely new note when he says :

> "The divine Guru sent me for religion's sake :
> On this account I have come into the world—
> 'Extend the faith everywhere :
> Seize and destroy the evil and the sinful.'
> Understand this, ye holy men, in your souls,
> I assumed birth for the purpose
> Of spreading the faith, saving the saints,
> And extirpating all tyrants."[1]

Two points are importants to notice here. In the first place, what we have here is a far-off cry from the spirit that prevailed during the earlier days of Sikhism when, being repeatedly molested by the local Muhammadans, the Sikhs of Goindwal asked Guru Amar Das in despair as to how long they were to endure this tyranny and the Guru replied : "As long as you live ; it is not proper for saints to take revenge." But Guru Gobind Singh now says that all tyrants are to be extirpated. There is a story given in the *Gur Biias* which appears to us to be extremely apposite in this connection and we would mention it here for what it is worth. It is said that when towards the close of his career, the Guru, with a few companions, was proceeding southwards in response to an invitation from Aurangzib, he came across a shrine belonging to the followers of Dadu. The incumbent of the shrine learnt about the identity of the Guru and his circumstances from the Sikhs who were with him and invited the Guru to enter the shrine and take rest for some time. The Guru complied with the request and, when both were seated, the incumbent told the Guru that no claim should be placed on anyting in this world and that

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 300, 301.

the Guru had suffered because he had done so. In reply the Guru said that claims should, by all means, be kept and enforced and all enemies plundered. There was silence for some time and then the follower of Dadu said that having regard to the circumstances of the *Kal Age* a man should lower down his head if anybody threw a brick at him. The saints were all of opinion that in this age forgiveness, patience, humility and the like should be the guiding principles of life. The Guru also agreed that due regard should be had to the circumstances of the time and therefore, if anybody threw a brick, a stone was to be thrown on his head. The *Kal Age* had reached such a stage that success would come only if a brick could be returned with a stone. People should therefore get fully armed. Excepting the few pure-minded, nobody, in those days, cared for saints, and that was the reason why he created the Khalsa.[1] The Guru's was thus frankly a new ideal, though, no doubt, it was elaborated on the heritage that he had received from his predecessors, to meet what, in his view, were the pressing needs of the time.

Secondly, the Guru's categorical assertion that he had assumed birth for spreading the faith, saving the saints and extripating all tyrants, reads like an echo of what we get in the *Gita*.[2] But there is a difference ; the Guru merely claims that he is the chosen instrument of God for the redemption of the world and he is careful to point out :

> "All who call me the Supreme Being
> Shall fall into the pit of hell,
> Recognise me as God's servant only ;
> Have no doubt whatever of this.
> I am the slave of the Supreme Being
> And have come to behold the wonders of the world."

Most religious teachers are generally deified by their followers or worshipped as proclaimed instruments of God and

1 *Gur Bilas*, XXIV, 17-38.

2 *Gita*. IV, 7, 8,
Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp, 299, 300.

words are soon put into their mouths to prove indisputably their divine descent. But it is much rarer to find teachers themseves declaring that God charged them with the mission of showing to mankind the true ways of religion. Of one such prophet Rodwell says "that he was urged on by an intense desire to proclaim that great truth about the unity of the Godhead which had taken full possession of his soul, that he worked himself up into a belief that he had received a divine call, that he was carried on by the force of circumstances and by gradually increasing successes to believe himself the accredited messenger of God."[1] Something very similar may also be said about the Guru. During his early retirement in the hills he had made himself thoroughly familiar with all Hindu literature relating to incarnations and other divinities and this must have fired his imagination. "He seems to have been deeply impressed by the idea which runs throughout the Pauranic literature, *viz*,, the idea of the saviour appearing from time to time to uphold righteousness and destroy unrighteousness, to uproot evil and establish good, to destroy the oppressor and rescue the weak and the innocent."[2] The sad plight in which he found his followers as well as the Hindus in general, religious strifes brought about by the persecuting policy of Aurangzib, the prevailing corruption, ignorance and superstition, and his own personal resentment at his father's execution must have generated in his mind an earnest conviction that this was undoubtedly the time for the rise of a saviour, and his strong impuleses and the force of circumstances in which he was placed soon led him to work himself up into a belief that he himself was the man the times needed.

The Guru's mission, therefore, was to spread the true faith and to extirpate the oppressor and the wicked. But for these purposes, particularly the second, the old weapons of service, humility and prayer were wholly out of place and in the very opening verses of the *Bachitra Natak* the Guru makes his position clear. His reliance was on God and the Holy Sword.

1 Rodwell, *Karan*, Preface p. 13.
2 Narang, *op. cit.*, pp- 131, 132.

The past that he had inherited and the circumstances in which he was placed naturally led him to think of God as the punisher of the wicked, and as the Sword is a great weapon for that purpose, in the Guru's mind the two became identical. "God subdues enemies, so does the Sword ; therefore the Sword is God, and God is the Sword." The Guru writes :

"I bow with love and devotion to the Holy Sword,
Assist me that I may complete this work.
Thou art Subduer of Countries, the Destroyer of the armies of the wicked, in the battle-field
Thou greatly adornest the brave.

.....

I bow to the Arrow and the Musket,
I bow to the Sword, spotless, fearless and unbreakable ;
I bow to the powerful Mace and Lance
To which nothing is equal.

.....

I bow to the Arrow and the Cannon
Which destroy the enemy.
I bow to the Sword and the Rapier
Which destroy the evil.
I bow to all weapons called Shastar (which may be held) ;
I bow to all weapons called Astar (which may be hurled or discharged)."[2]

The various weapons of war are, as it were, deified and the Guru leaves us in no doubt as to the method that he contemplated in the fulfilment of his mission.

II. The alleged worship of Durga

But before we can take up the study of the practical steps through which this mission was sought to be fulfilled, another matter has got to be disposed of. Almost all writers, Sikh and non-Sikh, assert that the Guru prefaced his attempts at reformation by performing a sacrifice in order to obtain the blessings of the goddess Durga in his new venture. Here we come to the most controversial question in the career of Guru Gobind Singh. On the one hand, we have the united testimony of a number

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V. p. 83.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 286. 287.

of writers and, on the other, the stubborn fact that such an act on the Guru's part would mean an unthinkable contradiction of one of the fundamentals of Sikhism and of his own repeated injunctions. Some modern Sikh writers, therefore, deny the story altogether,[1] while others suggested that the 'Guru's sole object in undertaking the ceremony was to demonstrate the futility and utter hollowness of all such practices.[2]

The *Gur Bilas*, possibly the earliest of the records where the story is mentioned, gives a vivid and picturesque account of the incident. Guru Gobind Singh is said to have assembled a large number of Brahmans and, after having tested them, dismissed those who partook of meat and wine, allowing only those who lived mainly on milk, to remain with him. The Guru expressed to these latter his desire of performing a *hom* (ceremony of burnt offering) in order to obtain the blessings of the goddess Durga and sought their advice in the matter. They told the Guru that Dattanand of Ujjain was the fittest person to undertake the charge of an affair like this, and he was accordingly sent for and soon arrived with a number of assistants. Dattanand had then an interview with the Guru and in reply to the Guru's question explained to him the ways in which the ceremony would have to be performed. He told the Guru that in the *Kal Age* it was extremely difficult to make the *Devi* manifest and, moreover, the expenses for such an undertaking would be enormous. The Guru assured him of all expenses and soon collected a large amount from the Sikhs who had assembled in a fair on the occasion of the *Holi*. Dattanand had then a second interview with the Guru. He prepared a long list of the things that would be necessary and asked the Guru to select a suitable site on the Sutlej where the *hom* might be performed. The Guru then gave the necessary orders for completing the arrangements. Dattanand again warned the Guru that not less than 1,25,000 rupees and about 4 years' time would be necessary

1 Khan Singh, *Ham Hindu Nahin*, pp. 53, 56, 116-124. Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, XV.

2 *Panth Prakas*, pp. 166-174. Teja Singh. *Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism*, p. 52.

to bring the *hom* to a successful end, but the Guru told him not to worry and to get on with it.

The ceremony commenced on the bank of the Sutlej and it opened with songs in praise of the *Devi*. After these preliminaries were over, the Guru began the worship of the *Devi* under the directions of Dattanand. The Guru's experiences thereafter are described in some detail and these were mostly of a fearful character. However, after some days Dattanand told the Guru that the time for the *Devi's* appearance was drawing near and that it was now necessary to offer her a sacrifice. The Guru is said to have named some Sikhs but Dattanand insisted that the Guru should offer for sacrifice one of his own sons, preferably the son whom he wanted to succeed him. The Guru, however, refused to accede to this request and it seems that a Sikh was made to serve for the purpose instead. Dattanand then asked the Guru to be ready for the *Devi's* manifestation and left the Guru alone on the spot, after warning him that the appearance of the *Devi* would be accompanied by great natural calamities. The Guru was warned not to be afraid and asked to go on repeating the *mantras* prescribed to him. But the Guru was now alone and his experiences were terrible. But he remained still. Thereafter his experiences became more terrible ; high stormy winds, devastating rains, earthquakes and similar other disturbances came in quick succession and it seemed that the world was going to pieces. Still the Guru sat composed. At long last the *Devi* manifested herself and the Guru greeted her with the words, "*Jay Jagmat*." The *Devi* blessed the Guru, gave him her own sword and then disappeared. The Sikhs then assembled from all quarters and there were great rejoicings at this happy and auspicious termination of the affair.[1]

In other records the story is given with variations. For instance, it is said by some that the Guru was ready to offer one of his sons as a sacrifice to the *Devi* but that the opposition of his mother and wives stood in the way and compelled him to choose a Sikh instead. Again, it is said that when the *Devi*

1 *Gur Bilas*, VIII.

2 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 695. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

made her appearance the Guru, in terror, shut his eyes and it was therefore ordained that he would have no success in his life time but that his sect would flourish after his death. Instances might be multiplied, but thesee details belong to a realm which is clearly beyond our province and it is no use pursuing them further.

The only thing that is important for us to consider in this connection is whether there is any truth in the tradition that the Guru had performed this *hom* ceremony. As we have said, this question is a highly controversial one and has become more so with the changes that have taken place in Sikh mentality during the last half a century or so. Most of the older writers, Sikh and non-Sikh, accept the tradition as true though, as we have seen, they often differ as to details. But a different note is struck in the *Panth Prakas* for the first time. This book was written in 1880 and, in the meantime, a movement had started among the Sikhs to raise Sikhism once again to the strict ideals of its founders. The contradiction involved in the story of the *hom* or ceremony soon attracted the attention of the reawakened Sikhs and an attempt was made to explain it away by suggesting that the Guru's object in performing it was to show up the hollowness of the pretensions of the Brahmans and the utter futility of all such practices. Consequently, the story now assumed a different character.

It is stated by Bhai Gyan Singh, the author of the *Panth Prakas*, that some Brahmans suggested to the Guru that if he performed a *hom* in order to make the *Devi* manifest he might, with her aid and blessings, ensure his success against his enemies. They also informed the Guru that there was a Brahman named Kesho at Benares, who possessd supernatural power and who might make the *Devi* appear if he was provided with the necessary facilities. The Guru did not agree, but in the meantime, Kesho came to hear of these proposals, and, as he was a very greedy man and knew of the open-handedness of the Guru he himself came to Anandpur and represented to the Guru that if he once made the goddess manifest he would be peerless

1 Cunningham. *op. cit.*, p. 70.

in war as the *Devi* had been in her battles with the demons. The Guru now outwardly accepted the offer in order to demonstrate Kesho's insincerity and provided all that was required. The beautiful hill of Naina Devi was fixed as the spot where the *hom* was to be performed. After nine months had passed in worship and invocation Kesho declared that the time for the *Devi's* appearance was drawing near. Pressed by the Guru, Kesho gave three dates, one after another, for the manifestation of the *Devi* but when nothing happened on any of these dates he told the Guru that some holy person must be offered as a sacrifice to the goddess before she could be made to disclose herself. Thereupon the Guru said that Kesho himself was the fittest person for this, for none could be holier than he. At this Kesho fled in terror and then "the Guru ordered that the materials which had been collected for the ceremony should be thrown into the hom-pit. Upon this a great flame shot up towards the heavens. When this was seen from afar, all the spectators felt certain that the Guru himself had caused Durga to appear. The Guru drew his sword and set out for Anandpur. When the people asked if the goddess had appeared to him, he raised his sword aloft, inasmuch as to say that by God's assistance his sword would perform the deed which the Brahmans attributed to Durga. The people then erroneously believed that the goddess had given him the sword."[1]

It is clear that here we have a deliberate editing of the old tradition in order to make it more conformable to the gradual change that Sikh opinion was undergoing. But this position, too, was soon abandoned and it began to be stated that the *hom* had never been undertaken and that the story was all an invention. The teaching of the Guru and his predecessors with regard to the unity of the Godhead was so fundamental to the basic conception of Sikhism and the injunction to the Sikhs to worship none but the One True Lord was so categorical and imperative that it was clearly unthinkable that the Guru would contradict himself in this abject manner. Though it is true that such an

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 65.

argument can hardly be regarded as decisive in determining a factual issue in history, its force should, by no means, be underestimated. Thus the *hom* ceremony had either been undertaken in right earnest or had not taken place at all. The second view, that suggests that the Guru had undertaken the ceremony in order to demonstrate in a practical manner the futility of all such practices, appears to us to be unacceptable because of the very late origin of the story and also because the circumstances in which it arose enable us to guess the motive of its origin.

The account given in the *Gur Bilas*, of which a summary has already been given, is plain and unambiguous and the other writers also agree, more or less, with regard to the central theme, though, no doubt, there are differences in detail. The account current in the hills is also substantially of the same character. "The story goes that Guru Gobind before embarking on his campaign against the Turks sought the aid of Naina Devi. He brought with him a Brahman of Benares and for months kept up the *homa*. At last the Devi appeared and the Guru, awe-stricken, presented his sword which she touched and disappeared. The Brahman, however, declared that the stigma or defect in the rite caused by the Guru's display of fear could only be removed by the sacrifice of one of his sons. To this he agreed, but the mothers of his four sons objected. So one of his followers was sacrificed, the goddess reappeared and promised prosperity to his sect."[1] There can thus be no doubt that there exists a very strong tradition with regard to this *hom* ceremony. Indeed, one Sikh writer, whom Malcom regards as "one of the most respectable and best informed authors of that sect," goes to the extent of saying that the Guru "spent much of his time, in devotion, at a temple of Durga Bhavani, the goddess of courage, by whom he was directed to unloose his hair and draw his sword. Govind, in consequence of this divine order, vowed he would preserve his hair, as consecrated to that divinity, and directed his followers to do the same."[2]

Most writer have found it difficult to brush aside this

1 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 695.
2 Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 49, 50.

solid mass of traditional evidence, and the contradiction, referred to above, has been sought to be resolved by attributing a political motive to the Guru. Rose says: "Surrounded during his childhood by Hindu influences, Gobind Rai succeeded to his office under every temptation to remain within the pale of orthodox Hinduism."[1] As we have seen, during the whole of the pre-Khalsa period the Guru whole-heartedly mixed himself up in the affairs of the semi-independent Hill chieftains with the object of arriving at some sort of lasting understanding with them. The Kangra hills, moreover, were the stronghold of Hinduism and the people were fanatically steeped in the *Devi* cult. Even now "*Devi* is a popular object of veneration all over the province, but her worship is most in vogue and most diversified in Ambala, Hoshiarpur and Kangra," and we are told that "in Kangra alone there are numerous local *Devis*, and 360 of them assembled together at the founding of the Kangra temple."[2] As Rose says, "we hear of no explicit condemnation of the cult of Devi," and though enjoined to worship none but the One True Lord, it is quite possible that "even the Sikhs cherished a lingering faith in the power of the gooddess." Thus, whether looked at from the point of view of his own followers or from wider aspects, the *Devi's* was an influence which was considerable, and Narang says: "The Guru did not believe in any deity except the True and Deathless One, but whether to show his followers that there was no such power, or to win over the popular sympathy and confidence of the populace as the chosen favourite of their favourite Deity, it seems to be beyond doubt that the Guru ordered a great sacrifice to be performed with the ostensible object of making the goddess appear."[3]

On the other hand, it is important to remember that the earliest of the records where the *hom* ceremony is mentioned is possibly the *Gur Bilas*, a work written as late as 1798, and it is indisputable that in course of the century that passed since

1 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 694.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 318.
3 Narang, *op cit.*, p. 147.

the inauguration of Guru Gobind Singh's reforms, the Sikhs had travelled a long way off from his ideals. It is of course difficult to say to what extent the ideals of the Guru were realised in parctice but there can absolutely be no doubt that the Sikhs of the earlier eighteenth century were truer to the Guru's principles in all respects than their successors of the days of the Sikh Monarchy. These latter had relapsed to many of the practices of Hinduism and this can be very fully illustrated by clear and indisputable evidence. We do not think that it is necessary to go into details and a few crucial examples would be enough for our purpose. The testimony of Forster and Malcolm clearly shows that the Sikhs of their days had reverted to caste usages both with regard to interdining and intermarriage and marriages even outside the community were also, by no means, rare, provided the caste considerations were favourable.[1] But apart from this question of caste, which every sect that arose from within Hinduism has found it difficult to eschew altogether, we find that Hindu gods and gooddesses, Hindu religious shrines and well-known Hindu practices had again invaded Sikhism. For instance, during the last few days of his illness Maharaja Ranjit Singh is said to have bestowed in charity money, jewels and other property of the supposed value of fifty lakhs of rupees and "among his jewels he directed the well-known Kohi-i-nur diamond to be sent to the temple of Jagannath."[2] Not only this ; the Maharaja also bequeathed large offerings to the great shrines of India and Sardar Uttar Singh Sindhanwalia was sent on a mission to distribute the same.[3] Sardar Atar Singh was sent to Gayaji[4] to perfrom the usual rites for the dead Maharaja and his ashes were conveyed with due pomp and ceremony to the Ganges. Honighberger has left us details of the obsequies of the Maharaja on which occasion four of his wives and seven emale slaves become *sati* or immolated themselves together with the Maharaja. The Brahmans recited their prayers from the

1 Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-137. Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
2 Secret Consultations, 4th. Dec., 1839, No. 78-80. National Archives of India Government).
3 *Ibid.*, 21st Sep., 1840, No. 98.
4 *Ibid.*, 24th Feb., 1840, No. 75.

Shastras and received lavish gifts and we find the same story repeated with regard to the funerals of Maharaja Kharak Singh and Prince Nau Nihal Singh.[1] These examples, many more like which might be added, leave little room for doubt that these latter-day Sikhs had travelled far away from the ideals of their Guru. The worship of the *Devi* had again become popular and it is quite conceivable that in this changed mental climate the Durga legend originated and gradually got current.

This is in effect what Kartar Singh says. He writes : "The alleged worship of Durga by the Guru, and all the stories based thereon, are mere fictions, inventions of clever, yet un-Sikhlike people, who desired either to justify their own degradation from the lofty principles, proclaimed by the Gurus, to please their idolatrous neighbours, or perhaps, to lend to the Guru's, name a lustre which was in reality false, by showing to the Hindus that he could make the goddess show herself and grant his wishes."[2] However far-fetched or even fantastic such view might appear at first sight, in the context of what has been said above, it strikes us, on the contrary, as quite a reasonable surmise. This view of the matter, moreover, receives considerable added strength from the negative evidence of the *Gur Sobha* of Saina Pat, one of the 52 bards whom the Guru kept in his employ and, as such, one of his closest associates. Saina Pat's account of the Guru's adventures during the pre-Khalsa period and of his reforms is, no doubt, scrappy in the extreme but he gives the salient facts and his silence with regard to the *hom* ceremony should, therefore, be regarded as significant—the more so, as next to the Guru's own works, the *Gur Sobha* is possibly the most important authority on Guru Gobind Singh. In fact, but for the limitations of negative evidence in general, this omission might even be regarded as decisive. Further, Macauliffe has drawn our attention to another very interesting point. The later chroniclers, who narrate this incident of the worship of *Devi*, say that it took place in the year 1698 on the hill of Naina Devi, near the Sutlej. But it seems that Guru was at that time occupied

1 Honighberger, *Thirty-five years in the East*, pp, 99-104, 106, 107.
2 Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

otherwise. "On the fourteenth day of June of that year the Guru according to his own statement completed his translation of the Ram Avatar from Sanskrit into Hindi. He adds that it was completed at the base of the lofty Naina Devi on the margin of the Sutlej waters." Thus it appears that "the Guru, during the time the chroniclers state he was occupied in worshipping Durga, was in reality translating Sanskrit works in the seclusion and tranquility of the mountain glades."[1]

Finally, we come to the question as to whether there is any evidence in the Guru's writings as to any connection of his with the *Devi* cult. It should be made clear at the outset that the huge compilation that goes by the name of *Dasham Padshah Ka Granth* is not all the Guru's own but a substantial portion of it consists of the composition of the bards whom the Guru kept in his employ. Now, the pieces that are relevant to the question in hand are *Chandi Charitar*, I and II, and the *Bhagauti-ki-War*. Of these only the last alone appears to be the Guru's own composition but, as Macauliffe points out, all three "are abridged transtations of Durga Sapt Shati or seven hundred sloks on the subject of Durga.....on the contests of the goddess Durga with the demons who had made war on the gods."[2] There has been some discussion with regard to the meaning of the word *Bhagauti* and also to the implication of a couplet that occurs at the end of *Chandi Charitar* II. Some say that the word *Bhagauti* means the goddess Durga, while others say that it means the sword. It is stated in the couplet referred to above that those saints who continually meditate on Chandi would obtain salvation[3] and find God as their reward, and the question has been raised as to whether this is to be regarded as the opinion of the Guru himself or merely of the bard who had composed it. But to us it seems that these points are, more or less, irrelevant. The Guru writes :

I do not at the outset propitiate Ganesh :
I never meditate on Krishan or Vishnu ;

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 66, 67. See also p. 310.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 80.
3 *Ibid.*

I have heard of them but I know them not ;
It is only God's feet I love."[1]

In spite of this we find, among the Guru's compositions, pieces extolling the deeds of Krishan and Ram. The Guru states : "I have rendered in the vulgar dialect the tenth chapter of the Bhagawat with no other object than to inspire ardour for religious warfare,"[2] and it is evident that the praises of Chandi were translated and popularised for a similar purpose. And Durga could never be an object of worship to the Guru, for he reiterates, again and again, that it was the Creator alone who should be worshipped and Durga had been created by the Creator for the destruction of the demons.[3]

We have stated above, we think fairly and squarely, the different views that obtain with regard to this very controversial question. We have already given our reasons for holding that the second view appears to us be the weakest and it may be added here that it strikes us as extremely improbable that the Guru had gone through the severe expense and trouble that the ceremony entailed for a purpose that was wholly negative. The *hom* ceremony, therefore, had either not taken place at all, or if it had, it must have been during the earlier part of the Guru's career when he was a younger man, surrounded by Hindu influences, without and within,[4] and when his object appears to have been to come to some sort of a lasting understanding with the Hill Rajas, who were all fanatical worshippers of the *Devi*. In the *Bachitra Natak* the Guru says :

Thou turnest men like me from blades of grass into mountains ;
than Thou there is none other Cherisher of the poor.
O God, do thou Thyself pardon mine errors ; there is none who
hath erred like me."[5]

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 310, 311.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

4 As we have tried to show elsewhere, the difference between a Sikh and a Hindu was not as clear-cut and definite as it became after the inauguration of Guru Gobind Singh's reforms. Moreover, at least some of the bards whom the Guru kept in his employ were, as Macauliffe says, "tinctured with Hinduism." (*Ibid.*, p. 80)

5 Macauliffe, *ibid.* p. 287.

It may not be improbable that the Guru is here referring to the incident in question and the policy that he had pursued in his earlier life.

III. The Making of the Khalsa

Interesting though this controversy undoubtedly is, it has no relation to the Guru's reforms and is, in no way, vital for our comprehension of them. We may thus leave it safely to itself and pass on to a consideration of the measures that the Guru took to fulfil his mission. As we have hinted before, the Guru's problem was, on the one hand, to put an end to the process of disintegration which had become a feature of Sikhism since the closing years of the pontificate of Guru Hargobind and, on the other, to revitalise the Sikhs by giving them a new ideology and a new programme of action. Stated somewhat differently, the Guru's problem was that in course of its development Sikhism had acquired certain adjuncts which it could neither completely assimilate nor entirely discard. A purely religious movement had slowly acquired certain accretions which were distinctly political. External dangers and the character of the Sikhs themselves equally demanded further development. On the other hand, there was hopeless disintegration within. The future of Sikhism therefore depended on how these contradictory forces were united under the banner of a common ideal and how uniformity was secured within the system itself in order to assure the cohesion of the secular movement that was to be based upon it. The Guru's reforms were intended to secure his fundamental objective, and though some of his reforms are negative in their import and some pronouncedly positive, they are interconnected as a whole and were meant to lead, directly or indirectly, to the same result.

Though the Sikh chroniclers do not tell us definitely whether the Guru's prohibitions and innovations were introduced gradually or all at once, somehow we get the impression that the first question that the Guru tackled was that of the *masands*. These *masands*, together with the *Sangats*, formed the pivot of the organisation that Gurn Arjan had created, and for several

decades had creditably served the cause of Sikhism. But the *masand* system could not continue long in proper order and even during the days of Guru Hargobind difficulties seem to have arisen. But the Guru was yet very powerful and it does not appear that the *masands* could go far in their recalcitrance. Soon, however, a new situation arose. "These collectors were at first chosen for their piety, integrity and high position, and were honorary officers. The office, however, soon became hereditary in the families of the first incumbents, and gradually falling into unworthy hands became an instrument of jobbery and oppression." It can be easily seen that a proper working of the *masand* system required, on the one hand, a strong, unchallenged central authority and, on the other, a set of pious and conscientious local workers. The disputes about the succession to the Guruship since the death of Hargobind led to a positive weakening of the Guru's position and prestige and the simultaneous existence of rival claimants gave the *masands* a ready excuse of misappropriating the offerings. Moreover, the *masands* themselves were more of a power than would, at first sight, appear. They were not merely the collectors of the Guru's dues but possessed episcopal functions as well. This enabled them to pose as persons of special sanctity and they gradually came to occupy the position of a sort of organised priesthood in Sikhism. "They gradually became very influential, in many cases independent of the Guru, and had their own followings." Thus it came about that the *masands*, who had been the foremost among the Guru's auxiliaries, became, in course of time, the greatest counterpoise to his authority.

The Sikh chroniclers give us many stories as to how finally Guru Gobind Singh became convinced of the utter perversity of the *masands* end determined to free his Sikbs from their tyranny. It is said that one day a company of mimes came to the Guru's court. The Guru asked them to imitate the *masands*. "One of them accordingly dressed as a *masand*, two as a *masand's* servants, and a fourth as a *masand's* courtesan riding behind him on horseback as he went to collect offerings for the Guru. The mimes portrayed to life the villainies and oppression practised by the

masands." Again, we are told that a *masand* "billetted himself on a poor Sikh, and claimed sweets instead of the crushed pulse and unleavened bread which formed the staple food of his host. The *masand* took the bread, threw it into his host's face, and dashed the crushed pulse on the ground. He then began to abuse the Sikh, and would not cease until the poor man had sold his wife's petticoat to provide him with sweets."[1] Various other incidents are narrated to show how the misappropriation of offerings had become almost a habit with the *masands* and to illustrate the subterfuges to which they resorted in order to gain their nefarious ends.[2] These stories may or may not be true, but the substantial truth behind them is testified to by the Guru himself. He writes :

> "If any one go to the *mesands*, they will tell him to bring all his property at once and give it to them.
>
> If any one serve the *masands*, they will say, 'Fetch and give us all thine offerings.'
>
> 'Go at once and make a present to us of whatever property is in thy house.'
>
> 'Think on us night and day, and mention not others even by mistake.'
>
> They put oil into their eyes to make people believe that they are shedding tears.
>
> If they see any of their own worshippers wealthy, they serve up sacred food and feed him with it.
>
> If they see him without wealth, they give him nothing, though he beg for it ; they will not even show him their faces.
>
> Those beasts plunder men, and never sing the praises of the Supreme Being."[3]

It is thus clear that the *masands* had degenerated into a disruptive force and a drastic remedy was needed.

But in spite of repeated complaints the Guru seems to have waited long before he took any decisive action against the *masands*. His hesitation is not difficult to understand, for the *masands* brought him his revenues and were the main channel of communication between himself and his followers. Any drastic

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 89.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 84-89. *Gur Bilas*, X.
3 Macauliffe. *ibid.*, pp. 322, 323.

interference with the *masands* was bound to put the whole Sikh organisation out of gear, but even this supreme consideration could not deter the Guru indefinitely and at last he was roused to action. The *masands* were denounced and ex-communicated from within Sikhism. The story goes that his compassion for his followers was excited so much that "he had the *masands* all captured and brought to Anandpur where he destroyed them, to the number of 2,200, in boiling oil and by other torments."[1] This does not seem credible as the Guru had hardly the means of laying his hands on all *masands*, particularly on those of outlying districts, and it seems more probable that some of the *masands* were punished, some were pardoned[2] but the order was abolished for ever.

Closely connected with the suppression of the *masands* is the question of the dissentient sects, viz., the *Minas*, the *Dhirmalias* and the *Ram Rayees*. The prophecy that Guru Amar Das is said to have made at the time when he made the Guruship hereditary in the family of his daughter, Bibi Bhani,[3] was only too literally fulfilled. All of those sects, as we have already seen, owe their origin to contests for the Guruship. Prithia, as also Dhir Mal and Ram Rai after him, based their claim "mainly on the primitive theory that sanctity descended in the physical sense," and when all their efforts failed, they founded separate sects of their own. Now, the activities of these schismatics operated in a variety of ways to weaken Sikhism. Rejected by the Sikhs in general, these dissentients sought to gain their ends by enlisting the support of the Mughal Government and Government officials and were thus instrumental in creating a good deal of misunderstanding between the imperial authorities and the Sikh Gurus. Prithia allied himself with Sulahi Khan, a local revenue officer, complained to the *Chaudhris* of Amritsar, entered into a conspiracy with Chandu and even approached the Emperor. He was never inactive and gave Guru Arjan no rest. After his death his son, Mihrban, continued the intrigues and it has been

1 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p 72.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 86. *Gur Bilas*, X.
3 See Vol. I of the present work, p. 221.

suggested that the dangerous situation, to which he had been pushed by the intrigues of his cousin, might have been one of the reasons that led Hargobind to grasp the sword. Similarly, when Ram Rai was set aside in favour of his younger brother Har Krishan, he began his intrigues and even sought the intercession of the Emperor. This proving fruitless, he bided his time but even when on Guru Har Krishan's death his claims were again ignored and Tegh Bahadur "succeeded in being recognised as Guru by most of the Sikhs," he began his intrigues anew. His residence at Delhi and his ready access to the Emperor gave him ample opportunity and the Sikh records are unanimous in ascribing the earlier troubles of the ninth Guru to the machinations of Ram Rai as well as of Dhir'Mal and the Sodhi Khatris. Secondly, the example of these claimants for the Guruship was not lost upon the other members of the *Sodhi* family and it has already been seen how on the death of Guru Har Krishan twenty-two of them simultaneously claimed the Guru's *gaddi*. Many of the *Sodhis* began to consider themselves as entitled to the services of the Sikhs in general and appointed their own *masands*. A great disruptive force was thus let loose on Sikhism, of which the *masands* were not slow to take the fullest advantage. The greed of these aspirants after the Guruship and the recalcitrance of the *masands* fed each other and soon brought the entire movement to the brink of disaster. It was, therefore, just in the fitness of things that when denouncing the *masands* the Guru also denounced the *Minas*, the *Dhirmalias* and the *Ram Rayees*. The Sikhs were solemnly prohibited from having any social intercourse "with the descendants or followers of Prithi Chand, Dhir Mal, Ram Rai, or *masands*, who had fallen away from the tenets and principles of Guru Nanak."[1]

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 96.
It is said that the Guru denounced five bodies of men but there is some difference as to who these five were. Some add to the four mentioned in the text, the *Kurimars* or those who destroyed giri infants, while others take the *Minas* and the *Dhirmalias* together and add the *Bhaddanis* or those who shaved their children's heads. As there is no historical reason as to why the Guru would denounce the *Kurimars* or the *Bhaddanis* it seems to us almost certain that these names were added later to make up the number 5, which has a mystical significance in Sikhism. (Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. p. 696, f. n. 1 ; p. 697).

This was the most important of the measures that the Guru adopted to root out the evils that had made the history of Sikhism, since the death of Guru Hargobind, a story of progressive disintegration. But this, by itself, would not have meant much if he had not, at the same time, taken steps to "awaken his followers to a new life" and provide for a new integration. On the 1st of Baisakh, *Samvat* 1756 (middle of April, 1699), the Guru is said to have convened a great open air gathering at Keshgarh where he invited all his Sikhs to attend. When all had been seated, the Guru stood up and asked whether there was any among them who was ready to lay down his life for him. There was deep silence for some time and at last one Dayaram came forward. The Guru took him inside a tent which had been put up on the spot the previous night, killed one of the five goats which had already been put in store within the tent, came out and showed the dripping weapon to the multitude. He then asked for another man ; there was again silence all round and when the Guru had repeated his request for the third time, Dharm Das came forward to sacrifice himself for his Guru. He too was taken inside the enclosure, was seated by the side of Dayaram and another goat was killed. The Guru then again came out with an angry and fierce mien and loudly called for another sacrifice. At this something like consternation spread among the Sikhs who had assembled there ; they began to doubt the Guru's sanity and thought that he was no longer responsible for his actions. Some fled, some went to the Guru's mother to complain, but he could not be shaken from his purpose. At last, Muhakam Chand offered himself to the Guru and was similarly taken inside the tent. This was repeated two times more and the Guru secured two other Sikhs, Sahib Chand and Himmat, who were ready to lay down their lives for him.[1] With these "Five Beloved,"[2] as they came to be called, the Guru proceeded to lay anew the foundation of Sikhism.

The Guru is said to have attired the "Five Beloved" in

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 91-93, *Gur Bilas*, XI,

2 The Guru himself is said to have bestowed the name of '*Panch Piyare*' on these five.

splendid raiment and then initiated them according to the new rites that he now introduced. The method of initiation, which Guru Nanak had introduced and which had hitherto been current in Sikhism, was known as *charanpahul*. "In its inception the rite consisted of washing a toe of the Guru in a basin of water which was then drunk by the initiate who had to spend some time as a novice in the service of the Guru of his order and attain a certain degree of self-abnegation." It is further stated that "the initiate also drank water touched by the foot of other devout Sikhs, whatever their original castes, so that all pride of caste was destroyed. In the time of Guru Arjan the water was not touched by the Guru's toe, but simply placed under the *manja* or *masnad* of the Guru."[1] It is patent that the ideal behind this rite was that of humility and surrender but, as the Guru's view was that this ideal no longer suited the Sikhs, he considerably elaborated the rite and changed its entire spirit. The Guru took some water in an iron vessel, stirred it with a double-edged dagger, and then "repeated over it the sacred verses that he had appointed for the ceremony."[2] The "Five Beloved" were asked "to repeat '*Wahguru*' and the preamble of the *Japji*. He then gave them five plamfuls of the *amrit*[3] to drink. He sprinkled it five times on their hair and their eyes, and caused them all to repeat '*Wahguru ji ka Khalsa, Wahguru ji ka Fatah.*' On this he gave them all the appellation of Singhs or lions." The most significant thing to notice here is the substitution of the double edged dagger in place of the Guru's toe and the meaning is quite clear. The old ideal of humility and surrender was being changed into a new one of self-assertion and self-reliance. But the most

1 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 696, f.n. 2.

2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 94. These verses were the Japji (of Guru Nanak), the Japji (of Guru Gobind Singh), Guru Amar Das's Anand and certain Sawaiyas or quatrains of his own composition,

3 The consecrated water used in *pahul* is so called. *Amrit* means nectar. It should be stated here that according to Sikh tradition Mata Jito, the Guru's wife, went out of curiosity to the place where the Guru was about to initiate the "Five Beloved" with some country-sugar puffed cakes called *patashas*. The Guru asked her to throw the sweets into the holy water and the practice has since been continued.

remarkable episode in this connection came when the Guru stood up in an attitude of supplication and with folded hands prayed to the "Five Beloved" to initiate him in exactly the same manner in which he had initiated them. The astonishment of the "Five Beloved" at this proposal of the Guru knew no bounds as they failed utterly to understand the meaning of such a request from a man whom they all regarded as God's vicar on earth. But their doubts vanished when the Guru told them that the new method of initiation had been introduced under the direct order of the Lord. "They who accept it shall henceforth be known as the Khalsa. The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa. There is no difference between you and me. As Guru Nanak seated Guru Angad on the throne, so have I made you also a Guru." Thereafter, the "Five Beloved" initiated the Guru according to the new rites[1] and the principle was established that any five Sikhs could represent the Khalsa and give initiation to a novice. The Guru thus merged himself in the Khalsa and the whole sect was invested with the dignity of Gurudom.

According to the newswriter of the period the Guru is reported to have said : "Let all embrace one creed and obliterate differences of religion. Let the four Hindu castes, who have different rules for their guidance, abandon them all, adopt the one from of adoration and become brothers. Let no one deem himself superior to another. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism, eat out of one dish, and feel no disgust or contempt for one another.[2] It thus appears that the Guru's object was to obliterate all distinctions of caste and creed and weld his followers into one homogeneous whole. Cunningham says : "It may nevetheless be justly observed that Gobind abolished *casts* rather by implication than by a direct enactment ;"[3] but the implication is so clear that there can hardly be any room for doubt. As the outward and visible sign of initiation by *pahul* the Sikhs were enjoined to wear the five K's viz., the *kes* or

1 It was now that Guru Gobind Rai became Guru Gobind Singh but to avoid confusion we have throughout used the latter name.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 93, 94.
3 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

long hair, *kachh* or short breeches, the *kara* or iron bangle, the *kripan* or sword, and the *kangha* or comb. They were given the common cognomen of Singh and they were directed to regard themseves as sons of Guru Gobind Singh and Sahib Kaur and as inhabitants of the city of Anandpur. Their watchwords must be "Kritnash, Kulnash, Dharmnash, Karmnash, the forsaking of occupation and family, belief and ceremonies."[1] And, as we have seen, they were to be all equal, and any five of them might act as a Guru to a novice. It will thus be seen that the Guru struck at the root of all sorts of prejudices and in the society that he contemplated caste and tribal distinctions were entirely out of place. And further, as Cunningham says, "Gobind took away from his followers each ancient solace of superstition." All beliefs, rituals or ceremonies that implied the recognition of anything but the One True Lord were categorically rejected, As the Guru says :

> "He who repeateth night and day the name of Him whose enduring light is unquenchable, who bestoweth not a thought on any but the one God ;
>
> Who hath full love and confidence in God, who putteth not faith even by mistake in fasting, or *worshipping* cemeteries, places of cremation, or Jogis' places of sepulture ;
>
> Who only reconizeth the one God and not pilgrimages, alms, the non-destruction of life, *Hindu* penance, or austerities ;
>
> And in whose heart the light of the Perfect One shineth, he is recognized as a pure *member of the Khalsa*."[2]

The Guru thus aimed at creating a compact brotherhood in faith, which was also to be a brotherhood in arms. The Guru's reliance, as we have seen, was on the sword and he sought to exalt military prowess in all possible ways. He had changed his Sikhs into Singhs or warriors and "he withdrew his followers from that undivided attention which their fathers had given to the plough, the loom and the pen, and he urged them to regard the sword as *their* principal stay in this world." The sentiment of veneration for that which gives us power, our safety, or our daily

1 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 71. It may be added here that the Guru had also prohibited the use of tobacco.

2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 314, 315.

bread is common in human history and the Sword became an object of worship with the Sikhs, God himself being given the name of "All-Steel." "Those who were devout in the worship of the Sword were promised exemption from every other kind of religious rites or ceremonies," and he was to be regarded as of the Khalsa, "who combats in the van, who mounts the war horse, who is ever waging battle and who is continually armed,"[1] and "whoever desired to abide in the Khalsa should not fear the clash of arms, and be ever ready for the combat and the defence of his faith."[2] The Guru says :

"I am the son of a brave man, not of a Brahman :
How can I perform austerities ?
How can I turn my attention to Thee, O Lord, and forsake domestic affairs ?
Now be plesaed to grant me the boon I crave with clasped hands
That when the end of my life cometh, I may die fighting in a mighty battle."[3]

The Guru's preferences are thus stated in the clearest of terms ; the Name, no doubt, was still to remain the chief object of adoration but "blest is his life in this world who repeateth God's name with his mouth and meditateth war in his heart."[4] Thus in the Khalsa that the Guru created soldierly qualities were given the foremost place and though, no doubt, its members were asked to depend on God as well, it practically amounted to dependence on the Sword, because, as we have seen, they had been taught, at the same time, to regard the Sword as God and God as the Sword,

To the Almighty the Guru prays :

"All-Steel, I am Thy slave.
Deeming me Thine own, preserve me ;
Think of mine honour, whose arm Thou hast taken.
Deeming me Thine own, cherish me,
Single out and destroy mine enemies.
May both my kitchen and my sword prevail in the world.

1 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 375, 376.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 223.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 312.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 311.

The Guru's primary concern was thus with his kitchen and his sword, the one—the emblem of service to assist the weak, the helpless and the oppressed, and the other—the emblem of power to extirpate the tyrants, and the Khalsa was the instrument that he created to achieve this two-fold purpose. It is interesting to note that though in the later works it is sometimes said that the Guru's motives were frankly political, in his own writings we scarcely hear anything of dominion or sovereignty. On the contrary, in the *Bachitra Natak* the Guru writes :

> "The successors of both Baba Nanak and Babar
> Were created by God Himself.
> Recognize the former as a spiritual,
> And the latter as a temporal King."[1]

In his letter to Aurangzib the Guru says : "Thou art proud of thy empire, while I am proud of the empire of the immortal God."[2] Nor will it possibly be true to say that he "swore eternal war with the haughty and cruel Muhammadans." His war was with tyranny and oppression and the quarrel with the Muhammadans and the achievement of political dominion by the Sikhs followed as, more or less, inevitable corollaries of this basic conception.

The introduction of *pahul* and the simultaneous abolition of the pontifical Guruship formed the cornerstone of the edifice built by Guru Gobind Singh. Militarism was now adopted finally as an article of creed and the leadership of the community was left to the community itself, thus bringing into existence a military commonwealth with the fullest of democratic freedom. It is important to remember that the peculiar Sikh conception of the Guruship which studiously kept the personality of the Guru apart from its spirit[3] made this possible. When Guru Gobind Singh said that the Guru was the Khalsa and the Khalsa was the Guru he was merely adding one more to the several equations to which the Guruship had already been submitted, and though the change was, no doubt, revolutionary in some of its

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 305.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 206.
3 See Vol. 1 of this work, pp. 233, 236.

consequences, no revolutionary effort was required to achieve it, In one form or other the Sikhs were already familiar with the idea, and the vesting of the spiritual leadership of the community in the *Guru Granth Sahib* and of the temporal leadership in the Khalsa itself was the culmination of a process that had long commenced in Sikhism.

On the other hand, the entire outlook of the community was now transformed inasmuch as it no longer represented an humble attempt to live what it considered to be the true life and propagate by peaceful means what it regarded as the true faith, but henceforward it took upon its shoulders the responsibiiity of combating all sorts of tyranny and oppression with means adequate for the purpose. The Guru had declared that in the circumstances of the time a mere negative policy of the type of passive resistance was unsuitable and consequently his chief reliance was on the prowess of arms. With love and devotion he grasped the sword, "the subduer of countries and the destroyer of the armies of the wicked." The Guru's conception of the Khalsa, therefore, was a fully democratic compact community, armed to the teeth, struggling to maintain what it conceived to be the right path and fighting incessantly and without compunction tyranny and injustice in all their forms.

But though the ideology was new, the structure was built on the old and many of the ideas associated with the Khalsa had developed long back in Sikhism. Guru Gobind Singh made any five Sikhs competent to represent the Khalsa and the Sikhs were taught to believe that wherever five Sikhs would assemble the Guru would also be among them, but we had already read in Bhai Gurdas that "where there are five Sikhs, there is God."[1] Gobind invested the Khalsa with the Guruship and said that there was no difference between him and the members of the Khalsa but it has been seen how earlier in the history of Sikhism the individual Sikh had been exalted to a position almost equal to that of the Guru himself[2] and how the ideal played an active part in the every day life of the Sikhs. Gobind made the Sikhs

1 See Vol. 1 of this work, p. 246.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 247.

independent of a supreme guide and the brotherhood took the place of the Guru but it has already been pointed out that, even when the Guru was supreme and unqualified surrender to him was the law in Sikhism, the will of the brotherhood always exercised a vital influence in the decision of important questions[1] and the testimony of Mohsin Fani proves that this democratic idea had developed long ago in Sikhism. Gobind exalted military life above everything else ; but ever since the days of Hargobind military ideals had been associated with Sikhism and could never be entirely abandoned. But these ideas, which had grown with the progress of Sikhism and had been existing side by side without any apparent coherence, were now synthesised in a new concordance and made to flow in one single channel. All that the Sikhs held dear, all that they had been taught to revere, love of God, obedience and service to the Guru, and love for each other, were to be satisfied by serving the Khalsa, wherein were now embodied all their social and religious aspirations.

The newswriter, already referred to, says that as a result of the Guru's exhortation to forget caste and tribe the Brahmans and the Khatris left the meeting but "about twenty thousand men stood up and promised to obey him, as they had the fullest faith in his divine mission."[2] The Guru thus "made himself the master of the imagination of his followers," and they came to believe that the Khalsa was under the direct protection of the Lord. "Lord's is the Khalsa, Lord's be the victory" became their watchword. "A strong conviction of one's being the chosen instrument of God, and the confidence it inspires, are the strongest guarantees of success, and the Guru had given these guarantees to his followers." On the other hand, "many Brahman and Kshattriya followers murmured but that the contemned races rejoiced." Campbell remarks : "It is curious that intimately connected as the Khatris always have been and still are with the Sikh religion, only 9 per cent. of them should belong to it," and "a Khatri, when a Sikh, is ordinarily a Sikh of Nanak,

1 See Vol. I of this work, p. 247.
2 Macauliffe, *op, cit.*, Vol. V, p. 94.

rather than a devotee of Guru Govind."[1] The reason for this is plain; as a Sikh of Nanak "the Khatri could avoid the necessity of completely abnegating his caste principles" which the acceptance of Guru Gobind Singh's new dispensation made impossible. Most of the Khatris thus left the fold of the Khalsa thereby leaving also the leadership of the movement, which had hitherto been theirs, to the Jats. But down below it was just the other way about and the most eloquent testimony to the Guru's work is provided by the Rangretas, otherwise known as the Mazhabi Sikhs. Originally they were Chupras and belonged to the scavenger class and Mazhabi means nothing more than a member of that class converted to Sikhism. The tradition is that some members of this class brought back the mutilated body of Guru Tegh Bahadur from Delhi and as a reward for their devotion were admitted to Sikhism by Guru Gobind Singh. In due course they got the *pahul* and they seem to have fully justified the Guru's assertion that "those who accept the nectar of the *pahul* shall be changed before your very eyes from jackals into lions." The magic touch of the Guru's wand transformed the members of this despised class into efficient soldiers and we are told that one of the bravest of the Guru's generals was a Mazhabi named Jiwan Singh, who fell at Chamkaur and whose tomb is still shown there.[2]

Cunningham writes: "The last apostle of the Sikhs effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people, and filled them with a lofty though fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that

1 Rose, *op. cit*, Vol. II, p. 507,

2 Rose *ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 76. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, 71, f.n. 4.

"These Mazhabis in the past have proved themselves, and are at the present time, extremely good soldiers. The Pioneer Regiments into which they are recruited have a proved record of service in many campaigns." It appears, however, that during the period of Khalsa ascendancy the Mazhabis found that "the equality their religion promised them existed in theory rather than in fact. They occupied much the same position among the Jat and Khalsa descended Sikhs as their ancestors, the Sweepers, enjoyed among Hindus." Maharaja Ranjit Singh, we are told, had a great admiration for their bravery and enlisted them freely. "Being afraid, however, to form them into separete, corps, he attached a company to various battalions."

purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak."[1] On the other hand, we are told that "Guru Gobind organised the Sikhs to suit a special purpose. He called in the human energy of the Sikhs from all other sides and made it flow in one particular channel only ; they ceased to be full, free men. He converted the spiritual unity of the Sikhs into a means of worldly success, he dwarfed the unity of a religious sect into an instrument of political advancement. Hence the Sihks, who had been advancing for centuries to be true men, suddenly stopped short and became mere *soldiers*."[2] We are thus introduced to a question, which has been a matter of some controversy, the question as to whether the Khalsa arose logically and naturally out of the foundations laid by Guru Nanak and his immediate successors, or it was a superimposition which utilised the foundations for an entirely different purpose. At first sight it may seem that the religion of Guru Nanak and that which Guru Gobind Singh preached were radically different. Nanak had preached "love of mankind" ; Gobind preached "punishment of the wicked." Nanak's ideal had been to remain ever absorbed in the love of God and drink the nectar of the Name ; Gobind called upon his Singhs to sing God's name in the mouth but to meditate war in heart and for "the nectar of the Name" he seems to have substituted "the nectar of pahul." Nanak's motto had been "humility and prayer" ; Gobind's "self-assertion and extirpation of tyrants." Nanak had aimed at spiritual freedom, while Gobind emphasised potitical advancement and military glory. But such a superficial comparison ignores some of the basic facts of the situation and the actual forces at work, and its untenability becomes apparent when the position is reviewed a bit more closely.

Man, no doubt, is a social animal but in the deeper layers of his being he is severely alone and religion is primarily concerned with this latter aspect of man. Consequently, religion, in its truest sense, is more individualistic than social in character,

1 Cunningham, *ibid.*, p. 84.

2 Sarkar, *op. cit* , Vol. III, pp. 301, 332. The idea is Tagore's but it is Sarkar who brought it into the domain of history.

but as a group is formed and slowly evolves, outer institutions also come into existence which are mainly designed to create an atmosphere which the individual may find congenial for his progress in the spiritual path. Of these two sides, one is, more or less, static, where we are concerned with certain fundamental enunciations and certain fundamental disciplines. The other is bound to change as the objective situation changes from time to time, calling for new adjustments. So far as the group is concerned, a religion becames ineffective when it fails to respond to the demands of the time and its inner spirit is submerged by its outworn institutions.

Now, it would certainly be going too far to say that Guru Gobind Singh had, in any way, given up the essentials of Guru Nanak's teaching, which formed, as it were, the core of Sikhism. We find in his teaching, as in that of Guru Nanak, the same insistence on the worship of the One True Lord, the same idealisation of devotion and surrender, and the same glorification of the Name. The Guru writes:

"O mortal, touch the feet of the Supreme Being.
Why sleepest thou the sleep of worldly love?
Ever lay up the remembrance of God; renounce and flee from mortal sin.
If thou desire ever to have happiness of every kind, be absorbed in God's love.
O *man*, worship none but God, not a thing made by Him.
Know that He who was in the beginning unborn, invincible, and indestructible is God."[1]

And again:

"Without the support of the One Name
Deem all religious ceremonies as superstition.
Repeat God's name, establish God's name *in thy heart*:
Do penance unto God and repeat His name."[2]

Guru Gobind Singh admonishes his followers to consider their houses altogether as the forest and remain anchorets at heart, to eat little, to sleep little and to love mercy and forberance, to practise mildness and patience and not to attaeh themselves to lust, wrath, covetousness and wordly love if they wanted to

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, 324, 325.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 269.

behold the Real Soul of this world and obtain the Supreme Being.[1] And he warns them that no amount of political or military power could save them if they lacked the fundamental requisites of divine knowledge and devotion.[2]

All this is in the old Sikh spirit and enshrines the essence of the teaching. At the same time it would be idle to deny that in the Khalsa we breathe a new spirit. This has already been explained in detail and it would be enough to point out here that it is marked by the clear assumption of a more positive role in human affairs. Those who call this a "dwarfing of the unity of a religious sect into an instrnment of political advancement" commit themselves, at the same time, to the absurd proposition that military effeciency or political freedom is inconsistent with a true religious life. A leader cannot write on a clean slate and has to act within the framework of facts presented by a given situation. As we have seen, by the time Guru Gobind Singh ascended the *gaddi* the unity of the Sikhs had become a thing of the past and new forces were pressing for recognition. Of these the most important was the traditional character of the overwhelming majority of the Sikhs, *viz.*, the Jats, whose love of freedom and warlike spirit could no longer be denied a place within the system. As in adopting the dominant Christian faith the Goths and Vandals contributed largely to the process of change that had already set in ; as in adopting the dominant Buddhist faith the Scythians and the Kushan Tartars made similar contributions ; so in entering the ranks of Sikhism in ever swelling numbers during the days of Arjan and Hargobind, the Jats also largely contributed to the process of change that had already commenced. Guru Gobind Singh registered this change and, at the same time, synthesised it with all that was best in the old tradition, thus assuring a new lease of life to the movement. The well-known saying, "Scratch the Sikh and you will find the Jat," seems to suggest that in him there is only a veneer of Sikhism and the substratum is all Jat but it would be

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 324.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 272.

a futile pursuit to try to determine the respective degrees. The fact remains that the Khalsa was a compound of the Sikh and the Jat ; the Guru had united the religious fervour of the Sikh with the warlike temper of the Jat. It should be noted, however, that after this new synthesis Sikhism became more uncompromising and consequently more sectarian in character. The Sikhs were reorganised within the tightest of limits and this was the inevitable reaction of the hostile environment in which the Guru and his followers found themselves. This fact apparently lends some support to the view that the free and untrammelled growth of the Sikhs was thereby arrested but it was in the logic of events and could not be otherwise.

CHAPTER V

GURU GOBIND SINGH—THE LAST PHASE

1. The Guru leaves Anandpur

The immediate effect of the coming of the Khalsa[1] was to spread something like consternation among the Hill chiefs, who now found their position most seriously threatened. After the miscarriage of their revolt against the Mughal Government and their severe punishment, they were returning to the way of their forefathers, which, they now recognised, was the very best for them, when suddenly the Khalsa came upon them like a bomb-shell. It is true that the Guru did not want a quarrel with them but, as we have seen, his differences with these chiefs were, more or less, fundamental and these were now considerably accentuated by the Guru's reforms. After the introduction of *pahul* one of the first acts of the Guru was to send agents to different places in order to initiate the Sikhs according to the new rites and to spread the message of the new dispensation far and wide. Band after band of enthusiastic followers came to have the Guru's *darshan* and the Hill chiefs saw before their very eyes what a powerful crowd was gathering amidst them. They regarded the Guru as virtually an intruder, whose continued presence in their midst was a standing menace to their princely order, and it is not at all surprising that they became seriously alarmed when they saw this phenomenal increase in the Guru's power and this new enthusiasm among the Guru's followers. We are told that the Raja of Kahlur, who was the most directly concerned as Anandpur was situated within his territory, sought the advice

1 "This word comes from the Arabic *Khalis* pure, and was applied by Guru Gobind Singh to the Sikhs who accepted the baptism of the sword." (Macauliffe *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p 95, f.n, I). On the other hand, it is stated in the *Hakikat* that the whole nation was called by the name of Khalsa because "when the order of the Faujdar 'you leave the Khalsa, Sharifah, came, they decided : 'we are the Khalsah". (*Indian Historical Qnarterly*, March, 1942).

of the Raja of Handur and it was decided that a messenger should be sent to the Guru with a letter demanding that the Guru should either relinquish the land he was occupying or pay rent for it. The Guru's reply was that proper price for the land had been paid by his father and that, as no rent had been paid in the past, none would be paid now. Thus began the quarrel that embittered the remaining years of the Guru's life and ended in catastrophic consequences.

The Sikh records give us the impression that the war, that now commenced, was forced upon the Guru, who had no desire of running into hostilities and was, on the contrary, eager for an understanding with the Hill chiefs. In a sense this is true but it should be noted here that besides the fundamental differences already referred to, the Hill chiefs had another very serious grievance against the Guru and the Kahlur chief in particular saw the integrity of his dominion seriously threatened. The Guru had no possessions which he might call his own besides Anandpur and its suburbs and his main dependence was on the contributions of his followers. These, however, rarely came in the shape of essential supplies and, as the Gurus's followers daily increased, the problem of supply became more and more acute. The hill people had hardly any surplus and the Sikhs, therefore were very often driven to the necessity of taking supplies by force. The Sikh records themselves show that this was done again and again, though, possibly, sometimes payment was made at the current rates.[1] Thus this pressing need of the Sikhs, combined with the marauding instinct, which, we have seen, was inherent in their character, soon brought about a state of affairs which the Hill chiefs could, by no means, ignore. Chiefly at the instance of the Raja of Kahlur a combination was formed against the Guru, and the allied army took up its position at a place just outside Anandpur. The Guru, on his part, had already notified his followers that a battle was imminent and many had come and joined his ranks. Instead of resorting to a frontal attack the Hill forces were ordered to surround Anandpur and

1 *Gur Bilas*, xiii. 8, 9, *Gur Sobha*, viii. 40 ; ix, 1, 8, ; xi, 5, 6.

stop all ingress and egress. But this position the Guru was in no mood to tolerate and his son Ajit Singh soon organised an attack and fell upon the Hill troops. The battle lasted for several days, and Ajit Singh, though a lad of about 14, performed prodigies of valour. When the Hill chiefs saw that victory was slipping off their hands they held a consultation among themselves and at last decided to resort to a stratagem. They brought a cow and took an oath on it they that would be friends with the Guru if he would only leave Anandpur for a while and come back later on. Apparently this proposal was made by the chiefs so that they might save their faces and lend something of the colour of victory to their inevitable defeat, but the Guru, who was always opposed to unnecessary warfare, readily agreed to comply with the request and proceeded to Nirmoh, a village situated about a mile from Kiratpur. Thus a certain amount of vagueness is introduced towards the end of the narrative which is otherwise plain enough and we are left in some doubt as to how really the first battle of Anandpur ended.[1]

It seems clear, however, that the truce was a truce only in name, for while the Guru rested himself at Nirmoh his troops were let loose on the villages of Kahlur and many of them were plundered. Naturally, there were skirmishes here and there and

1 For the post-Khalsa period of the Guru's life the only reliable authority is the *Gur Sobha* and we have based our account mainly on it. As with regard to the pre-Khalsa period we depended mainly on the *Bachitra Natak* and the later records were brought in only when they seemed to throw light on some involved or disputed point or when they seemed to elucidate the rather cryptic and scrappy narrative of the Guru, so here also we have used them mainly for a similar purpose. Therefore in our narrative several incidents that are given in the later Sikh records find no place. For instance, it is said that the quarrel with the Hill chiefs began in the following manner : one day the Guru had gone to the Gun on a hunting excursion : two Hill chiefs, named Balai Chand and Alim Chand, resolved to surprise him. A fight ensued in which the two Rajas were worsted, Balai Chand being killed and Alim Chand leaving the field with the loss of an arm. After this defeat the Hili chiefs thought that it would be suicidal to allow the Guru to increase in power and forthwith applied to the Delhi Government for help. Two generals, Din Beg and Painda Khan, both commanding divisions of five thousand men, were sent against the Guru but were beaten back. After this the combined army of the Hill chiefs attacked the Guru and the first battle of Anandpur began. (Macauliffe, *op cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 120. 124, 125).

in one of these Sahib Chand was killed. This Sahib Chand appears to have been one of the heroes of the battle of Bhangani and had been in the front rank among the Guru's followers. A fierce battle ensued over his body which ended in a victory for the Khalsa, who then took the corpse of Sahib Chand to Nirmoh and had itduly cremated. The plundering of the villages continued and soon things came to such a pass that many people left their homes and retired to the forest for safety. Thus, when the Kahlur chief saw that he was unable to give protection to his subjects and save them from the oppression of the Khalsa, he decided to enlist the assistance of the Mughal Government and sent an envoy for the purpose. It is not quite clear to whom the, envoy was sent, but it seems probable that the *Subahdar* of Lahore was first approached and he sent the envoy to the Emperor's Viceroy at Delhi, the Emperor himself being absent in the Deccan. The representation of the Kahlur chief being duly laid there, the *Subahdar* of Lahore and the *Subahdar* of Sarhind were ordered to march against Guru Gobind Singh. The two armies united at Sarhind and then made a combined move against the Guru. Already apprised of these developments, the Guru also made preparations to meet the attack and persons who came for *darshan* were detained for participation in the coming battle. The Mughals attacked from one side and the Raja of Kahlur from another and a fierce combat ensued. The battle lasted for about a whole day and night and at last the Muhammadans were compelled to retire. The Guru also decided to leave Nirmoh but when he had just crossed the adjoining river, he was again attacked by the Muhammadans and another battle was fought on the bank of the river. This time, too, the Guru came out victorious and the Muhammadans were put to flight.

When the battle of Nirmoh thus terminated in a victory for the Guru, the Raja of Basali came to him and invited him to his place. The Guru accepted the invitation and stayed at Basali for some time. There, too, the Raja of Kahlur attacked him again but the Guru had not much difficulty in beating the Raja

back. After this battle, which is known at the battle of Basali, the Guru rested himself for some time and on occasions enjoyed himself by going out on hunting expeditions. On one such expedition, which took place near about the village of Kalmot, a party among the Guru's followers were suddenly surrounded by the villagers, who then proceeded to attack them. When the Guru was informed of this he ordered the Khalsa to surround, in their turn, the villagers of Kalmot and a very sanguinary contest ensued. But the villager were no match for the Guru's followers and they were very soon compelled to submit. The Raja of Kahlur seems to have been completely unnerved by these repeated successes of the Guru and he now came forward with proposals of peace. An agreement was come to and the Guru returned to Anandpur, where he now built the fortress of Anandgarh.

The Sikhs now brought the villages round about Anandpur under their own control and for a time, at least, the very difficult question of supplies appears to have been solved. The Sikhs came and went and the Guru's *darbar* daily increased in prosperity and splendour. Two years and some days passed in this manner when again the old sore reappeared. The Khalsa horsemen again began to fall upon villagers and levy contributions by force. Those who paid forthwith were not troubled further but those who delayed or refused were looted. The plain truth was thus brought home to the Hill chiefs that they could have no peace and security until the Guru was expelled from Anandpur. Evidently the villages around Anandpur had been ceded to the Guru by the Raja of Kahlur as a part of the agreement already referred to, and this, as we have seen, had ensured peace for two years. The Guru and the Hill Rajas apparently lived on friendly terms and the Mughals had no reason to interfere. But with the gradual increase of the Guru's power and the number of his followers, he could not go on without a further expansion of territory and the old troubles reappeared. Fresh hostilities became inevitable and the Hill chiefs arranged a formidable combination against the Guru. An ultimatum was sent to the effect that the Guru must forthwith evacuate the fort of Anandgarh

and the Guru's silent reply was to strengthen his defence. Thereupon Anandpur was attacked and another battle ensued. But the Hill chiefs, with their own unaided strength, again proved unequal to the task and the Guru had not much difficulty in beating the combination back.

But the Hiil Rajas were finally resolved not to tolerate this state of affairs any longer and they almost at once busied themselves in bringing about a much mightier alliance against the Guru. They again applied to the Mughal authorities and troops were sent to their assistance both from Sarhind and Lahore. At the same time their own resources were fully requisitioned and the Gujars and Ranghars, "who were at ancient enmity with the Sikhs," were brought in to join the war against the Guru. On the other side, the Guru ordered trenches to be prepared and wlth a cool resolve awaited the attack. The allies soon fell on Anandpur and a fierce battle ensued. With heavey casualties on both sides the battle continued for some time till, at last, the Khalsa soliders led a counter-attack and drove the allies away from Anandpur. The Hill Rajas and the Muhammadans retreated to a place away from Kahlur and held consultations to reconsider their plan of action. They soon came back, surrounded the Sikhs on all sides and the great siege of Anandpur began.

The siege was organised in such a perfect manner that all ingress and egress for both goods and persons were completely stopped and after a few days the Sikhs began to feel the desperateness of their position. The price of foodgrains rose to one rupee per seer and at this price also grains were not always available. There was also some difficulty with regard to water and we are told that sometmes four Sikhs would come out, two would fight and the other two would take water in. But the food position scon became extremely serious and the Sikhs were driven to some dangerous expedients in order to relieve it. At dead of night, bands of Sikhs began to fall on those places where the allies had kept their stores and bring some provisions to the beleaguered town. In this manner the situation was eased to some extent but this could not continue long as the allies

collected all their stores together in one particular place and effectively guarded it night and day. Thus the position again became desperate and the Sikhs saw that there was no other alternative but a direct assault on the besiegers. An attack was therefore made, but though the Sikhs fought with great bravery they were soon surrounded and overpowered. When this was brought to the notice of the Guru he said that the Sikhs should not have gone out like this without orders. But the situation grew worse, and after some days of extreme hardship the Sikhs again laid their grievances before the Guru. They were asked to bear it up a few days more, after which, the Guru assured them, the position would improve and the Sikhs would get food in abundance. Again a few days passed during which the Sikhs somehow carried on with the scanty rations that were distributed from the Guru's stores. Even a few assaults on the enemy were carried out but the Sikhs soon wore down under the tremendous ordeal and clamoured before the Guru that the only practicable course left was to leave Anandpur. The Guru said that if the result of the abandonment of Anandpur proved to be ruinous the responsiblity would be theirs. He made them sign a declaration to that effect and then gave orders for the evacuation of Anandpur. The Guru distributed his treasures among the Sikhs, each of whom made a bundle and put it on his head. They were also given arms of various kinds and, when everything was ready, whatever could not be carried was put on fire and the Guru with his party left Anandpur.[1]

This is the account that Saina Pat gives of what he calls the second battle of Anandgarh. From this account, however, it is not clear how it became possible for the Guru and his Sikhs to leave Anandpur in the face of the hostile army that sat tight around it. Saina Pat does not speak of any action for a breakthrough and it appears from his account that no obstacles were put in his path when the Guru left Anandpur with his companions. It was only when he had gone some distance that the Hill chiefs and the Muhammadans again came upon him and the battle of Chamkaur enused. It thus seems almost certain that the

1 *Gur Sobha*, xi.

two parties had come to some arrangement with regard to the evacuation of Anandpur and we think that we can, by no means, ignore what the later chronicles tell us in this connection. The story has many ramifications and is developed in great detail but the point that is relevant for our purposes here is that both the Hill chiefs and the Muhammadan generals are said to have taken solemn oaths, the former on the cow and the *salagarm* and the latter on the Koran, "of safe conduct for the Guru should he evacuate Anandpur."[1] These oaths appear to have been most wantonly violated and to this we have poignant references in the *Zafarnama*.[2] In fact, Saina Pat himself refers to violation of oath by the imperial officers in connection with Daya Singh's mission to Aurangzib.[3] We may take it, therefore, that some agreement had been come to with regard to the evacuation of Anandpur by the Guru and his Sikhs and that it had been treacherously violated by the allies.

It is also not very clear from Saina Pat's account as to why the Guru got the declaration signed by the Sikhs on the eve of his abandonment of Anandpur. The matter is stated somewhat differently, and we think more logically, in the later Sikh records. We are told that the Guru was all through opposed to the evacuation of Anandpur as he was convinced that no trust could be placed on the promises of the Muhammadans and the Hill chiefs. But the hardships of the siege had become so unbearable that the Sikhs began to clamour for the acceptance of the allied terms and in this they were joined by tbe Guru's mother and some of his other relations. But still the Guru would not agree, and when the impatience of the Sikhs rose to what almost amounted to recalcitrance, he asked them to renounce their Guru and their faith and do as they liked. This was possibly the last desperate step that the Guru took to dissuade them but, after some hesitation, most of the Sikhs wrote letters of renunciation and left the Guru. We are further told that some of these repented afterwards and came unexpectedly to the Guru's assis-

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 184.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 204.
3 *Gur Sobha*, xiii, 33.

tance at the battle of Khidrana. All of them died there and the Guru, at the dying request of Mohan Singh, cancelled the letter of renunciation.[1]

II. Chamkaur and After

Be that as it may, with his ranks sorely depleted, the Guru proceeded and, after some time, took up his position on an eminence which he found on the way. But soon news arrived that the Muhammadans and the Hill chiefs were approaching and the Guru proceeded further on, leaving Ude Singh behind, evidently to cover his retreat. The Guru next came to a garden near about the village of Chamkaur and when the zamindar of the place came to know of this he came personally to the Guru

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 212-214.

In between the two battles of Anandpur the later records mention several other incidents which we have omitted in the narrative given above. It is said that Ajmer Chand of Kahlur was not in the least sincere in his profession of peace and took the earliest opportunity of again attacking the Guru. Two generals named Saiyad Beg and Alif Khan, each in command of five thousand men, were going from Lahore to Deihi and Ajmer Chand is said to have engaged their services against the Guru for one thousand rupees a day. Saiyad Beg, however, withdrew on the eve of the battle as he had, in the meantime, heard favourable reports about the Guru. When the battle between the Guru and Alif Khan rose to its fiercest pitch Saiyad Beg threw in his lot with the Sikhs and after the defeat of Alif Khan "remained with the Guru as a trusty and powerful ally." Next, Ajmer Chand incited some of his brother chieftains into an alliance against the Guru and attacked Anandpur. Being again defeated he appealed to the Emperor and a large army under Saiyad Khan was sent to reduce the Guru to submission. We are told that this Saiyad Khan was at heart an admirer of the Guru and when he came to know that an expedition was being sent against him, he contrived to get its command. During the early stages of the battle that foilowed, Saiyad Beg was killed after having accounted for a Hill chief. Then began a general engagement and soon an unexpected thing occurred. On beholding the Guru from a distance Saiyad Khan was visibly affected and, coming to the Guru, fell down at his feet. But though Saiyad Khan deserted his army the battle continued under Ramzan Khan and the Sikhs found it impossihle to withstand the onslaught. Anandpur was captured and the Guru's property plundered by the Muhammadans, who then retired towards Sarhind. The Sikhs pursued them and, defeating them, recovered the booty that they had captured at Anandpur. As Saina Pat definltely refers to a period of peace lasting a little more than two years (*Gur Sobha*, xi. 4) we could not find a place for these incidents, which may well be pious fabrications of a later age. (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 153-155, 162-164).

and invited him to come inside the village.[1] Thereupon the Guru established himseif at Chamkaur and sent messengers in all directions to apprise the Sikhs of this. In the meanwhile the Hill chiefs and the Muhammadans advanced and met Ude Singh on the way. A fierce combat ensued in which Ude Singh and his companions fought with great bravery and skill for about three hours but they were completely overwhelmed by numbers and cut to pieces.[2] The allied army then came upon Chamkaur and surrounded it on all sides. For sheer valour and endurance the battle that ensued has scarcely any parallel. The *Zafarnama*[3] and the later Sikh accounts say that the Guru had only forty companions with him. Saina Pat does not mention any exact number but it is clear that the Guru's army was infinitesimally small in comparison with the huge host that had encompassed it. But still there was no defeatism in the Guru's ranks and batch by batch the Sikhs went forward to certain death and never faltered or hesitated. The persons whom, besides the Guru, Saina Pat individually mentions are the two elder sons of the Guru, Ajit Singh and Zorawar Singh, and a Sikh named Sant Singh. All of them fought and died one after another, working havoc in the allied ranks, and lastly, the Guru himself engaged in the combat. But nothing more could be done and the Guru

1 *Gur Sobha*, xii, 7.

Macauliffe says that the Guru first took refuge in a garden and "sent to a Jat agriculturist to ask him for a place of rest. The Jat tried to put him off with excuses, but the Guru placed him under arrest for the moment. He then took the Jat's house, and turned it into a miniature fort where he took shelter with his men." (*op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 186). On the other hand, Sukha Singh says that on reaching Chamkaur the Guru asked the local zamindar to give him a place to stay in. On the zamindar's refusal the Guru forcibly seized his fort and imprisoned him. (*Gur Bilas*, xxi). The account given in the *Suraj Prakas* is again somewhat different. But it is clear that the place where the Guru took his shelter hardly deserves the name of a fort. It was a mud structure where the Guru extemporised a defence as best as he could.

2 Bhai Sukha Singh says that on leaving Anandpur the Guru went to Kiritpur, fighting rearguard actions all the way. Then he seems to have come near the Sarsa via Nirmoh and it was near the Sarsa that Ude Singh's battle was fought. It is said that in the confusion that followed, the Guru's party was dispersed, his two wives, Mata Sundari and Sahib Kaur, going in one direction and his mother Gujari with her two younger grandsons going in another. (*Gur Bilas*, xxi, See also, Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 180).

3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 202.

stealthily left the place, throwing dust into the eyes of the allies, who were waiting in eager expectancy of his capture or death.[1]

Searched by the Muhammadans on all sides the Guru somehow reached Machiwara,[2] "a town with a ferry over the Sutlej, twenty-two miles east of Ludhiana." There he took up his residence with two *masands* named Gulaba and Panjaba, who received him kindly and entertained him with goat's meat. But they soon became afraid of the consequences of harbouring a man like the Guru and frankly told him of their apprehensions. Fortunately at this crisis there appeared two men, named Nabi Khan and Gani Khan, who had sold horses to the Guru at Anandpur and were friendly towards him. The Guru asked them to bring blue clothes for him and assumed the garb of a *pir*. He was then borne in a litter by Nabi Khan and Gani Khan and his own attendants, and all enquirers were told that he was *Uch Ka Pir*.[3] In this manner the spies were deceived and the Guru came to Kanech "in the eastern part of what is now the Ludhiana district." Thence he went to Hetar where Nabi Khan and Gani Khan took their leave. The Guru is said to have given them presents and a certificate, stating the circumstances of their help and recommending them to the consideration of the Sikhs. The Guru then moved on and came to Jatpura, where he learnt of the terrible tragedy that had been enacted at Sarhind.

It has already been said that in the confusion that followed the battle near the Sarsa the Guru's mother, Gujari, with her two younger grandsons, Jujhar Singh and Fateh Singh, had got seperated from the Guru's party and had taken shelter under a

1 It is, however, stated in the *Gur Bilas* that Sant Singh, who resembled the Guru in appearance, was dressed in the Guru's clothes and accoutrements and left at Chamkaur when the Guru secretly abandoned that place. Sant Singh and his companions fought on and were killed and the Muhammadans cut the head of Sant Singh, thinking it to be that of the Guru. But the old commanders soon detected the mistake. (*Gur Bilas*, xxi. See also Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 190).

2 From this point till the Guru started for the south from Damdama Saina Pat is unaccountably brief and we have therefore mainly followed the *Gur Bilas* and Macauliffe.

3 The expression Uch Ka Pir meant either high priest as a general religious title, or priest of Uch, a well-known Muhammadan city in the southern part of the Punjab." (Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 192).

Brahman, who was a discharged cook of the Guru and a native of a place called Kheri near Sarhind. With the hope of getting a reward by surrendering the party to the Nawab of Sarhind the Brahman took the *Chaudhri* of Kheri into his confidence and then the two together went to the next highest official, the governor of Murinda. The latter came to the Brahman's house and took the Guru's mother and her two grandsons to Wazir Khan of Sarhind, who ordered them to be confined in a tower. Next day the two boys were brought before Wazir Khan, who asked them to embrace Islam if they wanted to save their lives. The boys gave a reply worthy of their parentage and Wazir Khan ordered them to be put to death. It is said that the Viceroy was incited by one Suchanand Khatri, who had a grudge against the Guru and who now meanly took this opportunity of having his revenge. Thus, though the Nawab of Maler Kotla made an attempt to save the lives of the boys, Wazir Khan stuck to his order and the two boys, aged only 9 and 7, were most mercilessly executed. When the Guru's mother heard of what had happened she fell down senseless and never rose again.[1]

The Sikh records state that the Guru received the news with perfect composure and proceeded on his way as if nothing had happened. Continuing his retreat he came to Dina, where he was hospitably received by Shamira and his brothers, grandsons of Jodh Rai, who had rendered assistance to Guru Hargobind on one occasion. It was at Dina that the Guru composed his letter to Aurangzib and sent it to the Emperor through Daya Singh and Dharm Singh. Then the Guru moved further on and reached Kot Kapura where he requested the owner of the local fort to hand it over to him. This being refused and news having

1 Macauliffe writes: "It is a general belief among the Sikhs that the children were bricked into a wall and suffered to die in that position, but the authors of the Suraj Prakash and the Gur Bilas both state that the children were put to death in the order of their ages by the sword of a Ghilzai executioner." (*op. cit*, Vol. V, p. 198). Saina Pat merely states that Jujhar Singh gave a fitting reply which put the Nawab and his courtiers into extreme uneasiness and that the two boys chose the path of martyrdom for the sake of religion as their grandfather had done. (*Gur Sobha*, xii, 73, 74). See also Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 88.

arrived that the army of Wazir Khan was approaching, the Guru again retreated and, after halting at several places, at last reached Khidrana. The Guru's attendants had, in the meanwhile, increased in number and he was not as helpless as he had been since Chamkaur. It was now possible for him to put up some defence, but as he found that the tank at Khidrana, which was in the present Ferozepur district of the Punjab, had run dry, he took up his position in a neighbouring forest and awaited the advance of the Muhammadan army. The brunt of the attack fell on those deserters of Anandpur, who, as we have said before, had unexpectedly come to the Guru's assistance. They were all overpowered but Wazir Khan's army could not continue the fight any longer. As in the battle of Lahira in the days of Guru Hargobind, the Muhammadans were soon in great straits for want of water and were compelled to retreat, and the Guru obtained what has since been acclaimed as a great victory for him. Khidrana has since been known as "Muktsar" or the tank of salvation and Sikhs in large numbers visit the place on the 1st of *Magh*, the anniversary of the battle.

After the battle of Khidrana the Guru, for some time, travelled from place to place and came to Talwandi Sabo, in the state of Patiala. It has since been known as Damdama or the breathing place, because here at last the Guru could pass some time in comparative peace. Here resided a great friend of the Guru named Dalla, who firmly stood by him, and in the meantime the Guru's strength also seems to have increased to some extent, as besides his regular followers, he had also taken some Dogars and Bairars into his service. Moreover, as Dalla is said to have pointed out, it was always open to the Guru to retire "into the recesses of the forest, where, even if an army penetrated, it would perish for want of water."[1] At any rate, the Guru was not disturbed for some time and he utilised the period of respite in laying strong the foundations of Sikhism in the Malwa tract. Many old and hereditary Sikhs were given *pahul* and brought more thoroughly into the Khalsa. One of them was the Guru's

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 220, 221.

friend Dalla but the most notable were the two brothers, Tiloka and Rama, the former the ancestor of the Nabha and the latter of the Patiala house. Besides, new converts were also made in large numbers and Trumpp says that the Guru added about 120,000 disciples. Ever since, Damdama "became the Benares of the Sikhs, and many resort thither, as a residence at Damdama is considered a very meritorious act. A saying of Govind Singh is current among the Sikhs, that whoever would dwell at Damdama, he would become wise, be he ever so great a fool. The study of the Granth is much in vogue there and the Gurumukhi writers of Damdama are considered the best."[1] This literary fame of the place may well have its origin in the fact that the Guru passed some, at least, of his time at Damdama in literary pursuits. A new recension of the *Granth Sahib* was brought out here and there can be no doubt that a part, at least, of the Guru's own works was composed at Damdama. It will thus be seen that looked at from the constructive point of view, we can credit to the Guru some very solid achievements at Damdama but the Guru left this work and started for the south, leading us to the last and the most controversial aspect of his career.

III. The Guru and the Emperors

The last two years, approximately, of Guru Gobind Singh's life were spent in a manner so unlike his previous career that the Guru's conduct has seemed almost inexplicable and conflicting views and accounts have necessarily followed. His journey to the south to meet Aurangzib, his participation in the battle of Jajau, where Bahadur Shah vanquished his rival Azam Shah and won the Mughal throne, his going to Delhi and Agra, and lastly, his accompanying Bahadur Shah in his Rajputana campaign and thence to the Deccan, have been so difficult to reconcile with the ideals of his life and his transparent character that all sorts of surmises have been resorted to for an explanation of his activities during the period in question. One writer has said that the Guru had become very much depressed and

1 Trumpp, *op. cit.*, p. xcii.

he went to the Deccan for a change of air,[1] while another has gone to the extreme of suggesting that the Guru had lost his reason and was no longer responsible for his actions.[2] Some, again, say that he went to the Deccan beacuse he had been given a small command by Bahadur Shah, and a Muhammdan writer makes the preposterous assertion that the Guru had even agreed to embrace Islam. Most of the sources are either inadequate or untrustworthy and it is not easy to cut a way through.

Now it has already been stated that from Dina the Guru had sent a letter to Aurangzib through Daya Singh and Dharm Singh and the Sikh choroniclers tell us that this was the well known *Zafarnama* or the Persian epistle to Auranzib. We are further told that "Daya Singh and Dharm Singh succeeded in delivering it, and were furnished with a parwana of safe conduct for their return journey. The perusal of the Zafarnama is said to have softened the Emperor's heart and led him to repent; hence his permission to the Guru's messengers to return to their own country in peace and safety. They, however, received no verbal or written reply to the Guru's letter."[3] Nevertheless, the Guru started for the south and, though many of his friends and followers attempted to dissuade him, he did not desist from his purpose.[4] Two points arise at this stage for consideration. In the first place, were the contents of the *Zafarnama* of such a character as were likely to produce repentance in a man like Aurangzib ? Secondly, how was it that without a *parwana* or assurance of any kind the Guru could proceed on his journey without any molestation from the local officers? The first point must ever remain a matter of opinion and it is quite possible that on a perusal of the *Zafarnama*[5] somebody might say that it was likely to produce just the opposite effect. The other point is more easily settled and there can be no doubt that

1 Bui Shah (Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 167, f.n 2.)
2 Malcolm. *op cit.*, p. 72.
3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp, 225, 226.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 226, *Gur Bilas*, xxiii.
5 An English translation is given in Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 201-206.

without an understanding of some sort the Guru could not have gone on freely with his journey.

On the other hand, as Irvine says, "the Muhammadan authors assert that Guru Gobind now sent in petitions to Alamgir, offering to make his submission, coupled with a promise to accept Islam. If this is true, no prospect could be more pleasing to such a bigot as that Emperor : and, as we are told, a confidential messenger, or mace-bearer, was sent to bring the suppliant to the court. The messenger produced Gobind Singh, in the first instance, before Munim Khan, then nazim or governor of Lahore, and diwan, or chief revenue officer, to Prince Muazzam (afterwards, as Emperor, known as Bahadur Shah). Govind Singh was forwarded by the governor to the Dakhin. On the way, the party heard of Alamgir's death, which took place at Ahmadnagar, in the Dakhin, on the 28th Zul Qada, 1118 (2nd March 1707) ; and Godind, believing his star was again in the ascendant, turnd his face and hastened back to Hindusthan."[1] Irvine admits that the story with all these details is not all credible but, at the same time, he says that there may be some foundation for it. We do not know what he actually means but it appears to us that if we take the Sikh and the Muhammadan accounts together three points come out clearly ; that the Guru had sent a communication to the Emperor, that some sort of an understanding had been arrived at, and that as a result of that understanding the Guru had started for the south. More than this, the evidence that we have discussed does not entitle us to say.

We would next turn to the *Gur Sobha*, in our opinion the soberest and the most reliable of the chronicles about Guru Gobind Singh. Saina Pat says that very soon after the battle of Khidrana[2] the Guru made up his mind that the time had come when the Emperor should be acquainted with the true

1 Irvine, *op, cit*., Vol. 1, pp. 88, 89.

2 No name is mentioned but it is clear that Khidrana is meant. (See *Gur Sobha*, xiii, 9-13),

details of all that had been happening. With that object in view he sent Daya Singh to Aurangib, and Daya Singh started with the letter secreted in his head beneath his turban. He was particularly warned that the letter was to be given to the hands of Aurangzib himself and, by no means, to anybody else. Daya Singh then started on his way and after some time reached Delhi. He came next to Agra and from there he proceeded to the south through Gwalior, Ujjain and the Malwa country till at last he reached Burhanpur. From there he finally reached Ahmadnagar *via* Aurangabad. Daya Singh naturally went to the *Sangat* at Ahmadnagar and explained to the local Sikhs the object of his mission. He does not seem to have received any sincere assistance from the local Sikhs, some of whom were even openly critical of the Guru's policy and actions. Thus a long time passed and Daya Singh failed to find a way of reaching the letter to Aurangzib. In this predicament Daya Singh sent a messenger to the Guru, apparently asking for further instructions. Curiously enough, no sooner had the messenger started than Daya Singh made the acquaintance of a Sikh who apparently had some influence in high quarters and arranged the delivery of the letter to Aurangzib. In this letter the Guru informs the Emperor that he was sending this Singh of his to him in order to acquaint him with the real story regarding himself, the imperial officers, and the Hill chiefs. He briefly states how he had been attacked, without any adequate reason, by a widespread combination of the Hill chiefs and how the local officials had sided wfth them. The Guru asks the Emperor whether he considered this fair. He further says that a true man of honour always keeps his word even if he loses his life thereby but a treacherous man says one thing and does another and the Emperor's officials acted like the latter and wantonly broke their pledges. The responsibility for this the Emperor was bound to bear and the Guru asks the Emperor, as a religious man, what answer he would give before God. The Guru concludes his letter by saying that he wanted to see the Emperor personally, with a retinue of one thousand horsemen, and requests the Emperor to issue

orders so that no obstacles may be put in his way. We are told that after perusing this letter and hearing what Daya Singh told him the Emperor issued orders to the effect that the Guru must not be molested in any way and that he should be allowed to go wherever he liked.[1]

It will be seen that the Guru's complaint, according to Saina Pat, is primarily against the officials, who, he says, wantonly broke their pledges and he makes the Emperor responsible only in the sense that he must accept responsibility for the actions of his officials. His appeal is to the Emperor's sense of justice and to his religious integrity. It is quite conceivable that in the light of the new knowledge that he now acquired about the late affairs in the Punjab, of which possibly he had been mostly ignorant, he now relented and issued the orders as stated above. The crucial point to remember is that the Guru's complaint is against the officials and not against the Emperor. But the tone and substance of the *Zafarnama* are entirely different. Here the Emperor himself is accused of having broken his oath on the Koran and he is described as a faithless man, a worshipper of wealth and perjurer. The Emperor is told point-blank that he knew not God and believed not in Muhammad. He might be a great monarch but far from him was religion. The whole document goes on in this strain and it is not difficult to guses whether it was likely to produce indignation or repentance in the Emperor's mind. On the other hand, the assertion of the Muhammadan writers that the Guru had surrendered and that he had promised to accept Islam is simply preposterous and must be summarily rejected. But it is a fact that a few months before the death of Aurangzib the Guru began moving freely about and this, we think, can best be explained on the supposition that something like what Saina Pat relates must have happened in the meanwhile.[2]

But the question still remains as to why the Guru sought an interview with the Emperor. The later Sikh records, no

1 *Gur Sobha*, xiii.

2 If this is true, the *Zafarnama* must be regarded as a modified and later version of the original letter to Aurangzib.

doubt, speak of frequent appeals to the Emperor on the part of the Hill chiefs and give the impression that the whole campaign against the Guru was being conducted with his full knowledge and approbation. But considering the fact that the Emperor was throughout this period living far away in the south at Ahamadnagar, the story of these constant appeals to him on the part of the petty and little-known Hill chiefs of the Punjab seems hardly credible; indeed, it is important to note that Saina Pat mentions an embassy to a Sultan only once and it is doubtful whether even here the Emperor is meant.[1] We may take it therefore that the whole thing was engineered by the local officials, among whom Wazir Khan of Sarhind appears to have taken the most prominent part. Besides a general knowledge, or what the local officials allowed him to know, the Emperor had no inkling into the real state of affairs. That was the reason of Daya Singh's embassy to Ahamadnagar. The Guru's point was that the local officials had unnecessarily and unjustly interfered in the quarrel which the Hill chieftains had forced on him, and having once taken sides they went to extremes which no canon of governmental ethics could justify. The crime of Wazir Khan, particularly, was of such a heinous and brutal character that the Guru would have been false to himself and one of his fundamental ideals if he sat idle and took no steps for the punishment of the wrong-doer. His dissipated resources and his accepted principle of taking to arms only when all other methods had failed led him to resort to diplomacy and it is quite understandable that this was the purpose for which the Guru sought to meet the Emperor. The death of Aurangzib checked him for a while, but ostensibly with the same purpose he helped Bahadur Saha at Jajau and kept himself in that Emperors's train till the end of his life. The Sikh records definitely state that this was the object with which he joined Bahadur Saha. That the Guru had joined the Emperor with a definite object in view and

1 *Gur Sobha*, ix, 10.

Whenever Saina Pat speaks of the Emperors he used the word *Shah*, and so it seems that by the word "*Sultan*" somebody else, possibiy the Emperor's representative at Delhi, is meant.

consultations to that purpose were going on is definitely proved by the Guru's letter to the Sikhs of Dhaul dated about the 15th of October, 1707, wherefrom it appears that "the old negotiations, that had brought him so far, were then in progress and that he soon expected to return to the Punjab."[1] But apparently the matter had not concluded when the Emperor started for Rajputna (12th November, 1707) and the Guru had to accompany the Emperor. The latter, however, avoided him under one pretext or another.[2] Thus, when he saw that his efforts had failed and that his own end was near, he commissioned Banda to accomplish by force what he had failed to accomplish by an appeal to justice. If this view is accepted all inconsistencies disappear and the Guru's activities during the last two years of his life cease to be the puzzle they have hitherto been.

Be that as it may, we are told that the Guru received the news of Aurangzib's death some time before he reached a place called Baghaur[3] in Marwar country. Thereafter the Guru's movements are somewhat obscure and Saina Pat tells us that he went to the place of Kichak and had a fight with the local people.[4] But he must have retraced his steps and, as Irvine says, "it seems certain that Govind Singh joined Bahadur Shah at some point, when that prince was on his march down country from Lahore to Agra, to contest the throne with his brother, Azam Shah."[5] Bahadur Shah's friendliness towards the Guru has once been seen before when he went unscathed while the Hill chiefs were severely punished, though his offence was the same, if not greater. The Sikh writers, as we have seen, attributed this to the influence of the prince's secretary, Nandlal, and we are told that it was this Nandlal who now advised Bahadur Shah to call the Guru to his assistance.[6] Whatever may be the

1 Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, p. 11.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 234, 235.
3 *Gur Sobha*, xiv, 29. *Gur Bilas*, xxiv, 102.
4 *Gur Sobha*, xiv.
It is difficult to say who this Kichak was and what place Saina Pat actually means.
5 Irvine. *op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 89.
6 *Gur Bilas*, xxv. Macauliffe, *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 230.

truth of the matter, it is undeniable that soon after the battle the Guru was with the new Emperor at Agra. The Sikhs say that the Emperor made the Guru some costly presents[1] and this is confirmed by an entry in the *Bahadur-Shah-Nama* of the 2nd of August, 1707, "when a jewelled scarf was presented to Gobind Singh." We are told that while at Agra the Guru resided in a garden about four miles distant from the imperial residence and he came on occasional visits to the Emperor.[3] A few months passed in this way till on the 12th of November, 1707, Bahadur Shah started on his Rajputana campaign. There is absolutely no doubt that the Guru also accompanied the Emperor. Saina Pat is clear on this point and Khafi Khan says: "During the days when Bahadur Shah directed his attention towards Haidarabad or when he started towards that place, one of the leaders of that infamous community, Govind by name, came unto the presence of the Emperor accompanied by two or three hundred *Sowars* carrying spears and some infantry, and proceeded in the company of the Emperor." The Guru's subsequent movements are thus bound up with those of Bahadur Shah and though Saina Pat states that on occasions the Guru left the main army and went some way on his own, he soon rejoined the Emperor's train and the itinerary that he gives agrees, in outline, quite well with what we get from the Mughal records. But during this whole period we find no reference anywhere that the Guru participated in any of the actions in which the Emperor engaged and it seems more probable that he had been travelling as a mere companion than that, as some writers say.[4] he had been given a command.

It should be noted, however, that the Sikh writers do not say that the Guru had himself participated in the battle of Jajau but that he only sent some men of his own. It was only when the battle was over that the Guru went to Agra *via* Delhi, Mathura and Brindaban. (*Gur Bilas*, xxvi. Macauliffe, *ibid.*, pp. 230, 231. *Gur Sobha*, xv). Regarding the first point Saina Pat merely states that Bahadur Shah sent the Guru a letter and the Guru replied assuring him that the throne was his (xv. 7-9).

1 *Gur Sobha*, xvi, 35. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 232.
2 Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 90.
3 *Gur Sobha*, xvi.
4 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 81. Trumpp. *op. cit.*, p. xciv. Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 262, 263.

IV. The Guru's death

In the train of Bahadur Shah the Guru, in course of time, arrived at a place called Nander "on the margin of the river Godavari in the present state of Haidarabad and about one hundred and fifty miles north west of its capital." Here the Guru was assassinated by a Pathan. The circumstances are involved in mystery and we have different versions of what had happened. Bhai Sukha Singh states that one day two Pathan youths came and greeted the Guru. They were asked who they were and where they came from. They replied that they were the sons of Painda Khan[1] and inhabitants of Chhota Mir, a village in the Jalandhar Doab, near the city of Jalandhar. The Guru received them kindly and gave them some money for their expenses. Two or three days later the boys again came and were similarly treated. A sword, which somebody had presented to the Guru and which was lying nearby, was given by him to one of the Pathans and the Guru said that a man, who had a sword in his hand and saw the enemy of his father or grandfather before his eyes and yet failed to avenge the wrong, had been born in vain. The young man was puzzled, and going home to his mother, he asked her what the Guru might have meant. The mother of the Pathan youth told him in reply that what the Guru said was true but yet he must, on no account, fight with him as the Guru was a very powerful man. The Pathan youth again came to the Guru and the latter repeated what he had told him last time. The young man was at last aroused and he struck the Guru, the third blow penetrating into the Guru's intestines. Upon this there was a row and a Sikh came and cut off the Pathan's head. The wound was sewed up and Bahadur Shah gave the Guru to understand that if he so desired he was ready to punish the other culprits but the Guru said that there was no need for that as he had received the wound according to his own desire. The Guru began to progress but he

1 *Gur Bilas*, xxix.

reopened his wound in attempting to draw the strings of a bow and expired soon after.

It will be seen that four points emerge out of the above story : that the Guru was assassinated, that the assassin was a Pathan, that the attack was self-invited, and that the Pathan was a son or grandson of Painda Khan. A son of Painda Khan, who had died in 1634, could, by no means, be a young man in 1708, and it may be doubted whether even a grandson could be. Thus in the other variant of the story the name of Painda Khan is dropped and we are introduced to a Pathan merchant who had sold horses to the Guru at Anandpur. This variant again has variants of its own. The story goes that one day when the Guru was apparently short of funds the Pathan came and asked for payment on account of the horses. The Guru told him to come some other day but the Pathan pressed for immediate payment. "He used an angry gesture, and his mutterings of violence provoked Gobind to strike him dead. The body of the slain Pathan was removed and buried, and his family seemed reconciled to the fate of its head. But his sons nursed their revenge, and awaited an opportunity of fulfilling it. They succeeded in stealing upon the Guru's retirement, and stabbed him mortally when asleep or unguarded."[1] This is what Cunningham writes but others state that taken by repentance the Guru took the deceased Pathan's wife and boy under his protection and brought up the latter as his own son. This boy is said to have been incited, as in the first story, by the Guru himself to strike him and the boy did it with fatal results.[2] Here again, it will be seen that the common factors are that the Guru had been assassinated, that the assassin was a Pathan and that the attack was self-invited. It is not difficult to guess how the story of the self-invited attack arose. The Sikhs who regarded the Guru as an instrument of God and sometimes, against the express injunc-

1 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
2 Macgregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, pp. 99, 100. See also Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

tions of the Guru, even as an incarnation,[1] could hardly reconcile themselves to the fact that Guru Gobind Singh had fallen a victim to the dagger of an assassin and in order to make it some what more acceptable the story of the self-invited attack was given currency. In fact, in the other versions which we will now relate this story finds no place.

According to Macauliffe the more probable account of the Guru's death is the one given in one of the recensions of Bahadur Shah's history. We are told : "The Guru was in the habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics, and indeed all varieties of people. One day an Afghan, who frequently attended these meetings, was sitting listening to him, when certain expressions which were disagreeable to the ears of the faithful fell from the Guru's tongue. The Afghan was enraged and, regardless of the Guru's dignity and importance, stabbed him twice or thrice with a poniard."[2] Though, as far as we are aware, there is nothing in the Guru's life and writings to show that he was a sworn enemy of Islam or to support Irvine's assertion that his own precept prohibited all friendship with Muhammadans,[3] the possibility cannot be ruled out that something might have been said in course of a religious discourse to rouse the ire of a fanatic, for fanatics are fanatics and anything may give them umbrage.

The *Gur Sobha* also says that, while at Nander, the Guru gave religious discourses and many people assembled around him, but Saina Pat's account of what followed is, however, radically different. We are told that one day a Pathan came to the assembly that daily met around the Guru, with murderous intentions. He waited there for two or three hours but could do no harm as there were many persons there. He went home and again came after two or three days. He sat continually for three

1 This we find even as early as the time of the *Gur Sobha* (v. 46 ; xiv. 1).

2 Macauliffe *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 241. See also *Torikh-i-Bahadur Shahi*, Elliott, Vol. VII, p. 566.

3 Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 91.

or four hours and then went away. After this he came successively for several days, studying the situation and making up his mind as to what time would be the best for carrying out his nefarious design. He decided that evening time would suit him best. So one evening he again came and the Guru called him to his side and gave him *prasad*, which the rascal ate. At that time there were no sikhs there and the only one attending on the Guru had also gone to sleep. The Guru reclined on his bed for rest and the Pathan, seeing his opportunity, drew out a dagger and struck the Guru in his belly. He repeated the attack for the second time but then his fate was sealed. The Guru drew out his own sword and killed the Pathan. The Guru then called out his Sikhs and they hurried to him from all sides. Two confederates of the Pathan had been waiting outside and these now tried to escape but they were captured by the Sikhs and killed at once. When the Sikhs saw the body of the Pathan they thought that here was another of the confederates and were about to strike it when the Guru stoped them by saying that the rascal had already been accounted for. As yet no one knew that the Guru had been wounded but when he got up and staggered they came to detect the sorrowful fact. The Sikhs were struck with grief and anxiety but the Guru consoled them and said that the Immortal God had saved him and that they need not have any fears. The wound was then washed and sewn but when the Guru tried to raise himself the thread broke. The wound was sewn again and in the morning treated with ointments. Three or four days passed in this way, many Sikhs came to have the Guru's *darshan* and at their request the Guru again appeared in his *darbar*. Again a few days passed and great was the rejoicing of the Sikhs. But the Guru knew that his end was coming and one night he retired to bed after taking a little food. About an hour and a half after midnight the Guru got up and began to recite the Word. He then called aloud to his Sikhs and bade then the last farewell.

Here at last we have an account which is free from all ambiguities and is perfectly sober and rational. Moreover, it is

the account of a contemporary, and an associate, who must have been in the know of things and we can think of no reason why it should not be accepted. Saina Pat, however, does not say anything with regard to the identity of the Pathan and the motive behind his murderous attack. It has been suggested, however, that the man was a hireling of Wazir Khan of Sarhind, who was the real instigator of the crime.[1] The increasing friendliness of the Emperor towards the Guru must have unnerved him because it was not difficult for him to guess the object that the Guru had in view in thus closely associating with the Emperor and even accompanying him to Rajputana and the Deccan. He was the greatest living enemy of the Guru and he must have felt and felt strongly that he was not safe so long as the Guru was alive. He execution of the two younger sons of the Guru was an unforgettable and unforgivable crime and he must have realised this in his heart of hearts. We think, therfore, that there is nothing unbelievable in the story that Wazir Khan was the real instigator of tho murderous attack that led to the Guru's death.

The death of Guru Gobind Singh occurred on *Katik sudi panchami, Samvat* 1765, which is equivalent to Thursday, the 18th of October, 1708.[2] All authorities are agreed that the Guru came to Nander in the train of the Emperor's army and it appears from Irvine's account that Bahadur Shah's army crossed a river, which must have been the Godavari, at Nander, on the 7th of October. "As he was hurriedly pushing on towards Hyderabad on a military expedition against his robellious brother, Kam Baksh, he could not have arrived here many days earlier. It may therefore be safely presumed that Guru Govind Singh, who, according to Sikh and other accounts, accompanied the royal camp as far as Nander, must have arrived here during the

1 This view is supported by the *Chatur Jugi*, an old manuscript written by Bhagwan Singh and discovered by Bhai Vir Singh of Amritsar. (Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 255. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 22).

2 For the rendering of the date I am indebted to Mr. P. C. Sen Gupta, a well-known writer on Hindu Mathematics.

last week of September, 1708."[1] The Guru's stay at Nander thus amounted to about three weeks and Saina Pat gives us a fair idea as to how the days were passed by the Guru. But it appears to us very significant that he does not say anything about Banda or his conversion to Sikhism. According to Sikh tradition the Guru reclaimed Banda and brought him within the fold of the Khalsa on the very first day of his arrival at Nander and this was virtually the only important act that he did there. It seems curious that Saina Pat should be totally silent about this vital matter, particularly, as he must have seen with his own eyes some at least of the terrible consequences that followed. We would therefore leave it to the reader to judge as to whether there may not be something after all in Rose's assertion that "there seems some reason to believe that he (Banda) had been active before the death of Gobind Singh and possibly it was that Guru's death which caused the leaderless Sikhs to flock to his standard."[2]

V. Epilogue

We had started with the suggestion that the correspondence between some of the preponderant traits in the Jat character and certain developments associated with the Khalsa appears to be remarkably close and that the transformation of Sikhism thus affords a rather striking example of the assimilation of the form of the religious system to the innate tendencies of the people.[3] As we have seen, the reactions first began to appear during the days of Guru Hargobind, leading to some concessions on the one hand and a good deal of misunderstanding on the other. Juxtaposed in this manner the two tendencies could not continue

1 Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 12, f.n. 9.

2 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 698, f.n. 5.

We are aware that negative evidence can hardly be regarded as decisive and we must not be understood to mean that Banda had no connection with Guru Gobind Singh because that would militate against a previous statement of ours that (*Supra*, p. 145) the Guru had commissioned Banda to accomplish by force what he had himself failed to accomplish by diplomacy. All that we mean is that there should be a more sifting enquiry into the matter.

3 Vol. I of this work, p. 21.

long in working order and we pass through an uncertain phase in the history of Sikhism. The greatest testimony to the constructive genius of Guru Gobind Singh is the outstanding fact that he could seize what was vital in the situation and, as Cunningham says, relume it with Promethean fire.[1] All that constituted the glory of Sikhism, the worship of the One True Lord, the word and the Name, the spirit of brotherhood and of self-sacrifice, found their proper place in the new dispensation, wherein, again, the Jat love of freedom and their martial spirit received the fullest recognition. And though it would be too much to expect that the marauding instinct inherent in the Jat could be reconciled with the ethics of a religious system, this too, was canalised to an appreciable extent. The Sikh gave him the ideal, the Jat material, and combining the two the Guru forged a dynamic force, which none could henceforward ignore. Speaking dialectically, we may say that the Sikh was the thesis, the Jat the antithesis, and the synthesis came in the Khalsa.

Trumpp says : "A body containing such elements could not remain quiet ; their course was prescribed to them, and they had indeed no other choice but to conquer or to be conquered."[2] The history of the Sikh struggle for independence in the eighteenth century fully bears out the truth of the above statement. Repeatedly repulsed and dispersed, prices laid upon their heads, their holy places desecrated and their temples destroyed, massacred in thousands and driven to the desert wilds, wantonly persecuted by the Mughals on the hand, and pillaged by the Durrani on the other, the Sikhs yet succeeded in erecting a sovereignty of their own, which, as Narang says, "gave a magnificent sunset to the stormy day of Hindu glory."

But attempts have been made to belittle the achievements of the Sikhs and ingeniously deny them their proper place in history. For instance, Sarkar writes ; "The Mughal Government under Aurangzib did succeed in breaking up the Guru's power. It robbed the Sikhs of a common leader and a rallying centre.

1 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

2 Trump. *op. cit.*, p. xcvi.

Thereafter the Sikhs continued to disturb public peace, but only in isolated bands. They were no longer an army fighting under one chief, with a definite political aim, but merely moving bodies of brigands,—extremely brave, enthusiastic, and hardy, but essentially plunderers uninspired by any ambition to build up an organised Government in the land. If Aurangzib had been followed by worthy successors, these Sikh bands would have been hunted down as surely as the Mirzas and Champat Rai Bundela had been in the past, and Dhundhia Waug and Tantia Topi were to be under British rule."[1] These statements betray such a complete misconception of Guru Gobind Singh's life-work and the ideology that he had created that one need hardly take them seriously. The Mughals had not robbed the Sikhs of a common leader but this was done by the Guru himself when he had left the leadership to the collective wisdom of the community, knowing fully well that as need-arose it would throw up its own leaders, and that the Guru's hopes were not belied is shown by the part that even such obscure men as Kapur Singh and Jassa Singh Kalal played in the Sikh war of independence. "The roving bands of plunderers" biunted the edge of the Abdali's aggresive power, which even the Marathas had failed to resist, and turned the great triumph of Panipat into a barren victory. That Mughal rehabilitation in the eighteenth century required only a few worthy successors to Aurangzib is a proposition which would be accepted by none who is even moderately acquainted with the facts of the case and no worthy successor could by some at least of the Lahore Viceroys. Finally, to compare the Sikhs with the Mirzas or with Champat Rai Bundela is to misconceive the entire issue of the Sikh war of independence and to ignore completely the ideological factors.[2] It must not be forgotten

1 Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 320, 321.

2 This seems to have been realised by Ahmad Shah Abdali because he knew where the shoe pinched. He "is said to have remarked that it would be necessary for the complete reduction of Sikh power to wait until their religious fervour had evaporated." N. K, Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power* (Second edition), p. 67.

that in the latter instance "a nation was up ina rms against its enemies and it is the collective efforts of the masses rather than individual achievements that ultimately made the revolution a success."[1]

Sarkar further says : "If Ranjit Singh had not arisen, there would have been no large and united state under Sikh dominion, but a number of petty principalities in the Punjab with a ruling aristocracy of Sikh soldiers, sending their organised marauders every year to raid and lay waste the country up to Delhi, Saharanpur and even Hardwar, or engage in their selfish internecine wars between clan and clan. These would have been silently absorbed in the expanding British empire. The Persian and not the Sikh gave the deathblow to the Mughal empire, and it was not from the heirs of Auranzib but from the Afghan inheritors of Nadir Shah that the Sikhs conquered the Panjab."[2] This again is a piece of logic into which, we confess, we are unable to enter. We are at a loss to understand what offence the poor Sikhs committed in conquering the Punjab from the Afghans and not from the Mughals. People would rather say that their performance was far the more creditable inasmuch as the Afghans were foreigners, whereas the Mughals had become Indians and their goverment was a native government after all. And it is important to remember that the British conquered the Punjab not from the Afghans but from the Sikhs, and when they took over, they found the frontier intact, with every inch of Indian soil inside it. Moreover, Ranjit Singh was in reality an aberration because a military monarchy was far off from anything that the Guru had contemplated. If, after the final expulsion of the Afghans, the Sikh could have had some little more time to settle down and the Guru's ideals a larger chance to fructify themselves, we might have seen the unique and unprecedented spectacle of something like a federated republic in place of the warring clans, sending out their annual marau-

1 N. K. Sinha. *ibid.*, p. 2

2 Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 321.

ding expeditions, but the circumstances were wholly unsuitable for such a consummation and Ranjit Singh arose instead.

Be that as it may, it is undeniable that Guru Gobind Singh must be counted among the greatest of Indians of all ages. "The object he attempted was great and laudable. It was the emancipation of his tribe from oppression and persecution ; and the means which he adopted, were such as a comprehensive mind could alone have suggested." To an atmosphere of gloom and utter degradation he brought a message of hope and deliverance and a will to do or to die. He not only brought into being a moral force of an intensely dynamic character but was careful to harness to it as much of material assistance as he possibly could. He was a saint as well as a soldier and his ideal was a brotherhood of soldier-saints. As he himself said, he bore no enmity to any one but he was the eternal enemy of tyranny and oppression, whatever might be their brand or form. He had declared on them a never-ending war and created the Khalsa to carry it on.

His poltical principles followed from this fundamental ideal. He had no quarrel with the Mughal Government as such and we have seen that in the *Bachitra Natak* he even recognises the temporal sovereignty of the successors of Babar.[1] But there are certain limits which a Government worth its name must not transgress ; it must be just, it must be impartial and it must, in no way, oppress its subject. Such transgressions the Guru was not prepared to tolerate and his quarrel with them was permanent. If this is understood aright and it is remembered that the Guru's principle was to take arms only in the last resort, his relations with the Emperor during the last two years of his life will cease to puzzle us and the career of Banda will reveal itself in its true perspective. We think further that the staunch loyalty that the Sikhs exhibited towards the British during the crisis of the Mutiny, so soon after their own subjugation, will also be viewed in a newer light. Whatever that might be, in

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V. p. 305.

the circumstances of the eighteenth century this fine distinction was difficult to maintain and it ceased to be valid for all practical purposes. The Mughal Government had become rotten to the core and it was becoming futile any longer to expect any justice from its officials. One trouble led to another and the Sikhs soon found themselves in the midst of a never-ending quarrel with the Muhammadans. This struggle inevitably coloured the views of later writers and principles and policies were attributed to the Guru, which find no support in his life and writings. It has been said that he was a sworn enemy of the Muhammadans and that his object was "to bestow empire on the Khalsa." The result has been that even a writer like Irvine has been led to make the astounding statement that the Guru's precepts prohibited all friendship with Muhammadans.[1]

It will not do for us to forget that, whatever else he might have been, Guru Gobind Singh was first and foremost a great religious leader. None but a person of a saintly disposition, highly spiritual and with a complete resignation to the will of God, could have behaved as he did during the most acute crisis of his life. Leaving his home and everything in the hands of the enemy he bids farewell to Anandpur, and with his ranks depleted and his family dispersed, his wives going in one direction and his mother with his two younger sons he knew not where, he arrives at Chamkaur and is at once surrounded by the Mughals and the Hill chiefs. After a superhuman fight against the heaviest of odds, in which he sees his two dearest sons and his chosen companions fall one after another before his very eyes, he stealthily leaves the place and for some time is hunted like a wild animal, now escaping in one disguise and now in another, when news arrives of the barbarous and brutal murder of his two younger sons and the no less tragic death of his mother. He faces all this with the most supreme composure and serenely goes on with his work as if nothing has happened. He compiles a new recension of the *Granth Sahib*, adds to his own

1 Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 91.

compositions and busies himself in laying strong the foundations of Sikhism in the Malwa tract. Certainly, no mere politician or soldier could have done it. It is signficant the after a very close contact with the Guru for more than a year Bahadur Shah treated him as a *darvesh* and ordered the considerable movable peoperty left by him to be relinquished to the heirs, though, according to rule, it ought to have been confiscated.[1] It is thus clear that the predominant trait in the Guru's character was that he was a man of God and it is unthinkable that such a man, a man who had preached that.

> "The temple and the mosque are the same; the Hindu worship and the Musalman prayer are the same; all men are the same; it is through error they appear different.....Musalmans and Hindus adopt the customary dress of their different countries.
>
> All men have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body, the same build, a compound of earth, air, fire and water.
>
> Allah and Abhekh are the same, the Purans and the Quran are the same; they are all alike; it is the one God who created all."[2]

could have been the sworn enemy of a community or a class. We would repeat again that there is nothing in the Guru's life and writings to support any such conclusion. The only thing that may be mentioned is the vendetta that he pursued against Wazir Khan of Sarhind but that was a different matter altogether, for to let Wazir Khan go unpunished would have been to deny the very basis of his creed.

The Guru was thus, first and foremost, a man of religion but he was also a man of many-sided attainments of which it is difficult to find a parallel. He was a poet of no mean order, and though tradition affirms that a substantial portion of his works was lost in the Sarsa at the time of his retreat from Anandpur to Chamkaur,[3] what survived is enough to establish his claims as a litterateur. It has been said that some of his works "deserve the very highest place in the ranks of Hindi poetry of the narrative and epic kind"[4] but more striking is the fact how

1 Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 90.
2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 275, 276.
3 Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
4 Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

thoroughly the Guru had realised what a vital part literature could be made to play in rousing the dormant energies of a vanquished and a degraded people. The stories from the old Sanskrit literature that he popularised in Hindi served as an effective handmaid to his constructive work and, at the same time, created a demand for literacy and education among his followers.

That Guru Gobind Singh was a great soldier and a great general would perhaps be denied by none who is even cursorily acquainted with the story of his military adventures. In the *Bachitra Natak* the Guru is rather modest with regard to his own performances and, as is to be expected, attributes his successes to the will of the Almighty, but from what little he says, it, is not difficult to see what an accomplished archer he was and how unperturbed and dauntless he could be even in the midst of raining death. In forming an estimate of the military abilities of Guru Gobind Singh it must not be forgotten for a moment that there was a tremendous disparity in numbers and resources between himself and his enemies and the amazing thing is not that he lost but that he could fight so long. The defence that he extemporised at Chamkaur, where, ss tradition affirms, the Guru, with only forty chosen companions, kept at bay for several hours a whole host of the opposing troops has hardly a parallel, and the keen and discerning eye with which he chose the spot where the battle of Khidrana was fought and the army of Wazir Khan was compelled to retire, leaves us in no doubt as to his tactical genius. As Cunningham says, "success is not always the measure of greatness" and this dictum should be kept in view in judging of the achievements of Guru Gobind Singh.

And enough, we think, has been said to establish fully the Guru's claim to be regarded as a builder *par excellence*. He brought a new people into being and released a new dynamic force into the arena of Indian history. What that force accomplished is a matter of history but what is not so well-known are the diverse ways in which it sought to uplift the depressed and

the down-trodden. Macauliffe says: "The Guru's teaching had the magical effect of changing a pariah or outcast through an interminable line of heredity into a brave staunch soldier, as the history of the Sikh Mazhabi regiments conclusively proves. This metamorphosis has been accomplished in defiance of the hide-bound prejudices and conservatism of the old Hindu religious systems. Prior to the time of the Sikh Gurus no general ever conceived the idea of raising an army from men who were believed to be unclean and polluted from their birth; but the watchword and war-cry of the Sikhs 'Wahguru ji ka Khalsa, Wahguru ji ka fatah', and the stimulating precepts of the tenth Guru, altered what had hitherto been deemed the dregs of humanity into warriors whose prowess and loyalty never failed their leaders."[1] Nothing further is required to prove the tremendous driving power of the moral force that the Guru had created. Cunningham writes: "A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people, and the impress of Gobind has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames. The features and external form of a whole people have been modified, and a Sikh chief is not more distinguishable by his stately person and free and manly bearing, than a minister of his faith is by a lofty thoughtfulness of look, which marks the fervour of his soul, and his persuasion of the near presence of the Divinity." Here again we have the testimony of a writer, who knew the Sikhs intimately, as to the many-sided transformation that the Guru's ideals had wrought in his followers. The strength of these ideals was sorely tested, as few ideals have ever been, in the terrible ordeal of the Sikh war of independence and it is a matter of history that they carried the Sikhs through.

But, as we have said before, there was one particular trait in the heritage of his followers which even the Guru could not completely eradicate. It is difficult to say how far the outrages on the subjects of the Hill chiefs and the plundering of their

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, V. pp. 99, 100.

effects were dictated by the necessities of the situation or were resorted to as reprisals but there are indications, here and there, that these did not always meet with the Guru's approval. It further appears that even when the Guru was proceeding in Bahadur Shah's train through Rajputana and the Deccan, incidents sometimes happened in which the Guru's followers took supplies from villagers by force.[1] As we have pointed out before, this predatory trait could hardly be reconciled with a religious system and it seems to us that it ever remained a discordant factor in the synthesis that the Guru had carried out. The new ideology, no doubt, kept it in check and sometimes gave it a wider purpose and direction, as is amply illustrated in the Sikh war of independence, but when the purpose was served and the end attained, it showed itself in the internecine quarrels that marked the period of the Sikh *misls*. Ranjit Singh kept it occupied in a systematic plan of expansion and conquest but, after his death, it soon reappeared in the lawlessness and rapacity of the Khalsa soldiery and in the more subtle ambition of some of the leaders, and became one of the main causes of the political debacle of the Sikhs in the middle of the nineteenth century.

But when all has been said, the fact remains that Guru Gobind Singh's handiwork, *viz*, the Khalsa, carved its way to renown and glory and played a noble part in the arena of Indian history. To our mind the Khalsa's greatest contribution to the cause of India was the wresting of the Punjab and the adjoining lands up to the frontier from the clutches of the Afghans. It is not improbable that if they had not done so, some of the setracts might have been lost, even geographiclly, to India, as some other tracts had been in the past. The Guru's followers kept the frontier intact and no service could have been greater. Their political creations have long gone the way of things human and they have passed through many ebbs and tides, but even now when they constitute roughly only one per cent. of the people

1 *Gur Sobha*, xiv, 19 ; xviii, 21.

of India, they hold a position and they wield an influence entirely out of proportion to their numbers. All this they primarily owe to the spirit of rectitude and self-sacrifice, of discipline and Godmindedness, that their Guru had instilled into them and their salvation in the future lies, as it lay in the past, in an unfailing adherence to the ideals of their founder.

APPENDIX A

The Chronology of Guru Hargobind

The difficulties about Guru Hargobind's chronology arise mainly out of two reasons ; in the first place, the period of twelve years for which, according to Mohsin Fani, the Guru had been kept in prison, is difficult to fit in, and secondly, it is often impossible to reconcile the Sikh accounts with contemporary Muhammadan history. The broad outline is clear enough and can easily be accepted. Guru Hargobind succeeded his father in June 1606, at the age of eleven, the Guru having been born in 1595, and his subsequent career, we think, may conveniently be divided into three distinct periods. The first period is practically synchronous with the reign of Jahangir and ends with that Emperor's death in October 1627. The second period witnesses the Guru's quarrels with the Mughal authorities and embraces, perhaps, the first six or seven years of the reign of Shah Jahan. The last is the period of Hargobind's retirement in the hills, which ended in 1645 when he died. There is not much difficulty so far, but as soon as we enter into details the position becomes radically different.

Now, the most important thing that happened during the first period of Guru Hargobind's career was his imprisonment by the order of Jahangir. All the records, Sikh and non-Sikh, are unanimous that both the imprisonment and release took place during the reign of Jahangir, the main difference being only with regard to the period of imprisonment. The Sikh accounts are, more or less, vague on the point ; some hint that it lasted for forty days, while others say that the period of imprisonment covered a little over two months.[1] On the contrary, Mohsin Fani explicitly states that the Guru was kept in prison for twelve years. The Sikh records are all much later, whereas Mohsin Fani was a contemporary and friend of Guru Hargobind,

1 *Panth Prakas*, p. 103. *Itihas Guru Khalsa*, p. 125.

and we would therfore start with the assumption that his statement is correct and see where it leads us.

It is clear that these twelve years must be fitted in somewhere between 1606 and 1627, the year of Jahangir's death, because both imprisonment and release had taken place during his reign. Now, according to Mohsin Fani, the Guru had been in the employ of Jahangir and on the latter's death automatically entered into the service of his son and successor, Shah Jahan. Hargobind necessarily was not a prisoner in 1627 and he could not have been imprisoned later than 1614, the period of his imprisonment being twelve years. But this lower limit goes down lower and lower when other facts are brought under consideration. It has already been stated that Kaulan, the daughter of the Kazi of Lahore, had taken asylum under the Guru. Some time after her arrival in Amritsar Guru Hargobind excavated the famous tank, Kaulasar, in her memory and we are told that this was done in 1621.[1] As Macauliffe points out, Kaulan was present in Amritsar even in 1620 when Baba Atal Rai, the Guru's second son by Nanaki, was born.[2] Before this the Guru had passed some time in association with Yar Khan, the Faujdar, and in certain other ways which, as we have seen, is difficult to specify. The Guru's third son, Ani Raj, was born in 1618, his second son Suraj Mal in 1617, and his eldest son, Baba Gurditta, towards the close of 1613. Thus it is clear that it is impossible to find a gap where those twelve years could be put in.

On the other hand, what the Sikh chroniclers say seems equally untenable. According to Macauliffe, the Guru was summoned to Delhi in 1612 and when his mother saw that he did not return in time, she became very anxious and sent Bhai Jetha to Delhi. "He succeeded in soothing the emperor, who had been troubled with fearful visions.," and as a reward, Jahangir, who had already been favourably inclined towards the Guru through the pleadings of Wazir Khan, ordered Hargobind's release. The period of confinement is not clearly mentioned, though, as we have said, it is hinted that it lasted only 40 days.

1 Macauliffe *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. p. 48.

2 *Ibid.* p. 49, f. n. I.

But there can be little doubt that the Guru had to remain at Gwalior for a much more protracted period and strenuous efforts were needed to soften the Emperor. We have already referred to Mohsin Fani's statement that during the period of the Guru's confinement the deputies and other Sikhs used to come and bow before the walls of the fort. When this had continued for some time the Emperor was moved by pity and set the Guru at liberty. And it is also quite probable that the intercession of the saint Mian Mir had to be requisitioned for the purpose. The matter, therefore, was certainly not as easy as the Sikh chroniclers would have us believe. Some of the Sikh records, on the other hand, state that the Guru was summoned to Delhi in 1616. But, as we have already said, it is impossible to reconcile these accounts with contemporary Muhammadan history. Jahangir left Agra in the autumn of 1613 and established his court and camp at Ajmer, in order to be in closer touch with the military operations that were then going on against Mewar. He left Ajmer on the 10th of November 1616 and entered Mandu on March 6th, 1617. Then Jahangir started on a tour in Gujarat and returned to Agra in the middle of April, 1619, after an absence of five years and a half.[1] Thus the Sikh accounts also are wholly unacceptable and we have to seek a fresh date for the imprisonment of Guru Hargobind.

We have already given some of the reasons as to why we consider 1607 or thereabouts[2] as a more probable time for the Guru's imprisonment. We think further that the postponement of the Guru's marriage with Nanaki lends added support to this view. This Nanaki had been betrothed to Hargobind when his father Guru Arjan was still living,[3] and the reasons given for the postponement of the marriage are the extreme youth of Nanaki and the Guru's absence in Delhi, Agra and other places.[4] But if Hargobind had been summoned to Delhi in 1612, he had

1 Beni Prasad. *op. cit.*, pp. 237, 277, 300.
2 *Supra*, p, 10.
3 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 77.
4 *Ibid*, Vol. IV, p. 50.

clear six years during which he might have celebrated his marriage with Nanaki. The question of extreme youth may safely be disregarded as the Sikh records abound in instances of very early girl marriages. The most plausible explanation would be that after his accession the Guru had very little time to think of his marriage. He was very soon sent to Gwalior and the marriage therefore could not be celebrated till after his release. It appears from the Sikh records that the marriage with Nanaki took place some time before the birth of Baba Gurditta[1] and it thus seems probable that the Guru's imprisonment lasted roughly from 1607 to 1612 or for about five years.

The causes of Guru Hargobind's imprisonment, as given by Mohsin Fani, have already been discussed and it is now necessary to consider whether the circumstances alluded to in the *Dabistan* existed near about 1607, for otherwise we shall have to find a different date. A little discussion will, however, show that the causes that Mohsin Fani puts forward were existent from the very beginning of Guru Hargobind's pontificate. We have already seen that immediately after his accession Hargobind adopted the style of a soldier and systematically turned his attention to the chase. He soon collected an army around himself, and his proclamation to the *masands* seems to have solved the difficulty about procuring ammunitions and horses. We know that the fine imposed on Guru Arjan had not been paid and thus all the reasons given by Mohsin Fani for the Guru's incarceration were there in 1607. The fact that the fine imposed upon Guru Arjan was made the main pretext for sending his son to Gwalior also points to an early date as it is unlikely that the demand would be suddenly revived after it had once been allowed to lapse. We are thus led to reject the evidence of a friend and a contemporary in a matter so vital that it is unthinkable that he should have erred. But it has been shown conclusively that a period of twelve years can, in no way, be accommodated and it may not be improbable that later copyists

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 50.

introduced some mistake into the text of the *Dabistan*. At the same time, we think that it should be clearly stated here that there is no direct evidence for the conclusion that we have suggested, though it appears to us the most plausible when all the relevant facts are dispassionately reviewed. It may, however, be urged against this view that in 1607 the Guru was too young to be taken seriously but the personal issue was unimportant. The purpose of the Emperor seems to have been to keep the young Guru as a hostage to ensure the orderliness of his followers and to put pressure on them for the realisation of the fine imposed on his father.

This brings us to the second period of Guru Hargobind's career. A study of the Sikh records makes it clear that hostilities with the Muhammadan Government commenced soon after the accession of Shah Jahan. It is apparent that, slender as his resources were, the Guru's struggles with the Government of the great Shah Jahan could not last long and, as we have seen, he was driven from post to pillar, till at last he found safety in the hills. Of the three more important battles of the Guru the first, that of Amritsar, was fought, according to Sikh chroniclers, in 1628 ; the second, that of Lahira, in 1631 ; and the last, that of Kartarpur, in 1634. The relevant facts have aleady been discussed and we do not think that there need be any difficulty in accepting these dates as correct. After the battle of Kartarpur the Guru, as we have seen, retired to the hills and lived in his retreat at Kiratpur, more or less, in peace till his death, which, as we have seen, occurred in 1645.[1]

1 *Supra*, pp. 30-31, f.n.

APPENDIX

The Chronology of Guru Gobind Singh

The confusion about the chronology of Guru Gobind Singh arises primarily because of two reasons ; first, the defective nature of the Sikh records and their silence with regard to vital points of chronological interest, and, secondly, the assumption that the Guru passed the first twenty years of his pontificate in utter seclusion in the hills. The first will be unfolded as we proceed but it may be stated at once than the seeond has directly led to the dating, by the more important of the modern writers, of the public career of Guru Gobind Singh from 1695, he having succeeded to the Guruship in 1675 on the death of his father. Cunningham, Narang and Irvine, all proceed on this basis, though Cunningham adds : "The period is nowhere definitely given by English or Indian writers; but from acomparison of dates and circumstances it seems probable that Gobind did not take upon himelf a new and special character as a teacher of men, until about the thirty-fifth year or until the year 1695 of Christ."[1] These writers not only say that the Guru's public career practically commenced near about 1695 but they also assert that the first important public act of the Guru was the making of the Khalsa and all his adventures were subsequent to that event.

But perhaps with the single exception of the authority quoted by Malcolm,[2] the Sikh records are unanimous in placing the introduction of Guru Gobind Singh's reforms in 1699 and they are corroborated by the news-writer already referred to. All these Sikh records also definitely say that the incidents narrated in the *Bachitra Natak* took place during the pre-Khalsa period.[3] But apart from the unanimous testimony of these

1 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 67. f.n. 2.
2 Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 186, f.n.
3 Excepting the *Gur Bilas*, which places the last incident, *viz.*, the coming ef the Prince. Mirza Beg and his four successors, in 1701.

records, there are several other facts which leave us in no doubt as to the truth of the mater. Indeed, there is one piece of negative evidence in the *Bachitra Natak* itself which appears to us as, more or less, conclusive. In his description of the battles the Guru gives his followers their full quota of praise and many of them are individually mentioned- We are informed of the feats accomplished by Sri Shah, Nand Chand, Kripal, Dayaram, Maheri Chand, Sangatia and others but nowhere does the common cognomen of "Singh" appear. This fact makes it practically certain that all these battles took place before the Khalsa came into existence. Equally decisive is the evidence of the Bilaspur *Banswara* which states that Raja Bhim Chand passed the closing years of his life as a *Fakir* after abdicating in favour of his son, Ajmer Chand, who became the 35th Raja in 1692 A.D.[1] Now, Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur (Kahlur) figures most prominently in the Guru's account. The battle of Nadaun, the negotiations with Hussain Khan and the fight against Raja Gopal of Guler, in all these Bhim Chand plays a very important part, and if he had abdicated in 1692, it follows that all these events happened prior to that year.[2]

Rose, who has been the first to give a close attention to this question, is of opinion that the incidents narrated in the *Bachitra Natak* must have taken place between the years 1691 and 1698.[3] He arrives at this conclusion mainly on two different grounds. He places the composition of the *Bachitra Natak* in *Samvat* 1755 (1698 A.D.) and secondly, he accepts Gurbux Singh's statement that the first of Guru Gobind Singh's letters discovered by him at Dacca was written at a time "when peace

1 *Simla Hill States Gazetteer*, Bilaspore, p. 6.

2 The *Gur Bilas*, however, states that Bhim Chand participated even in the great siege of Anandpur that took place near about 1702 but the *Banswara* is corroborated by some of the other Sikh records. In connection with the opposition to the Guru's reforms Ajmer Chand is given as the name of the Kahlur Raja by Macaulife (*op. cit* Vol. V, p. 99) and *Panth Prakas* (p. 204). This corroboration, however, is, more or less redundant because the evidence of the *Banswara*, which has been based on the State Archives, must be regarded as final.

3 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 690, f.n. 2.

still prevalied though munitions were being collected." But Rose also accepts the statements of the *Banswara* that Raja Bhim Chand had abdicated in 1692.[1] It is difficult to see how his views can be maintained. He says that hostilities probably commenced in 1692, the very year which witnessed the end of Bhim Chand's public career, but in that case the battle of Bhangani, the battle of Nadaun, the expedition of the *Khanzada* and the adventures of Hussian Khan will have to be compressed within a single year, which is manifestly impossible. From the Guru's own account it appears that at least the first and second of these engagements took place after an appreciable interval and one single year would be clearly insufficient. Moreover, the reasons that Gurbux Singh advances for his supposition that even in 1691 hostilities had not commenced, do not seem to be convincing. The letter in question "acknowledges the receipt of swords, cloths and money through some delegates sent by the Sangat and asks for more cloths, shields and war munitions."[2] So there is nothing in the letter itself which suggests that it was written at a time when peace still prevailed. Munitions would certainly be collected in anticipation of war but they would equally be collected when war was going on, or in some cases, even when war had ended. But Gurbux Singh really bases his argument on the second and third letters. These letters are not dated but Gurbux Singh states that they were evidently written at intervals of a few months after the first letter of 1691. In the second letter the Guru asks for a first class war elephant and that an elephant was actually sent is clear from the postscript, on the letter that followed.[3] Gurbux Singh goes on to say that "an elephant was also the primary cause of the commencement of hostilities against him by the Hill Raja of Bilaspore, who subsequently called in the Mughals to his help. The Sikh books relate that this was a Meghna elephant, a present from Raja Ratan Rai of Assam. As contemporary history does

1 Rose, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 690, f.n. 4.
2 *Dacca Review*, 1915, p. 231.
3 *Ibid*, 1916, p. 316.

not support the Sikh tradition, the elephant in question might have been the one sent from Dacca and possibly a present from Raja Manik Rai of Chittagong through the Dacca Sangat."[1] It is on the basis of this supposition that the elephant, which is alleged to be the immediate cause of the quarrel between the Guru and Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspore, had been sent by the Dacca Sangat after 1691 that we are asked to accept the statement that hostilities had not yet commenced in that year. The first part of Gurbux Singh's argument seems plausible and the point has already been disscussed. But it has also been seen that it is extremly doubtful whether Raja Bhim Chand had anything to do with the battle of Bhangani, which marked the commencement of hostilities, and we find it difficult to accept the statement of Gurbux Singh in the face of the unanimous Sikh tradition that hostilities had commenced earlier.

Most of the Sikh records are agreed that the battle of Bhangani, where the Guru received his baptism of fire, took place in 1687. A. D. Besides, there is a very interesting piece of evidence which we would mention here for what it is worth. We are told that after the battle was over Guru Gobind Singh rewarded those of his followers who had distinguished themselves in the fray. One of these fortunate few was a friend of the Guru's youth, the Brahman Dayaram, whom the Guru credits with "having fought bravely like Drona of old." He was given a shield made of rhinoceros-skin and it is still preserved in the residence of his descendants at Anandpur. It is about 2 ft. 3 ins in breadth and to it is attached a weapon resembling the triangular head of a spear. On the latter there is an inscription describing the circumstances of the grant, which is dated *Samvat* 1744 (1687 A. D.).[2] As we are not in possession of the opinion of any expert with regard to this inscription we need not place too much reliance upon it but it cannot be denied that it definitely proves the existence of a strong Sikh tradition

1 *Dacca Review*, 1916, p. 316.
2 T. Banerjee, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh* (in Bengali), pp. 170, 171.

that the battle of Bhangani was fought in 1687.[1] The failure of the son of Dilawar Khan and the expedition of Hussain Khan followed soon after and according to the *Panth Prakas* these were finished by 1691. This cannot be far off the mark as we must place these events before 1692, the year of Bhim Chand's abdlication, and though the Kahlur Raja had nothing to do with the expedition of Jujhar Singh, it is quite clear that much time could not have elapsed between the latter's defeat and the failure of Hussain Khan's expedition. Then we are told of the arrival of a son of Aurangzib in the Punjab,[2] who does not appear to have stayed long and was soon succeeded by Mirza Beg, who proceeded to plunder all those who had taken refuge in the hills when they heard that the Prince was approaching. All who escaped Mirza Beg were afterwards punished by four other equally relentless officers who succeeded him. We have no means of determining how these officers remained in the hills and how long their operations lasted.

Macauliffe does not say anything about the time of the Prince's arrival but, as he is inclined to place the composition of the *Bachitra Natak* in 1692,[3] he must be understood to have meant that the expeditions of the Prince, Mirza Beg and his four successors must have taken place before that year. The time allowed is evidently too short but how far it should be

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 1, f.n. 1.

2 The name of the Prince is not mentioned In the *Bachitra Natak* but Macauliffe says it was Prince Muazzim who succeeded Aurangzib as Bahadur Shah. Malcolm is of opinion that this must have been in the year 1701 and, curiously enough, Malcolm is supported by the *Gur Bilas* (xii, 143-185). Bhai Sukha Singh says that almost immediately after the creation of the Khalsa, difficulties with the Hill Rajas commenced and in response to the prayer of the Hill chiefs two successive expeditions were sent by the Mughal authorities. But both were defeated and then a Prince was sent and after him Mirza beg and the four other officers. But the circumstances under which the Prince came to the Punjab as narrated in the *Bachitra Natak* are totally different from those of 1701 ; moreover Sukha Singh also places the various other incidents, narrated in the *Backitra Natak*, previous to the introduction of his reforms and it becomes difficult to understand why the Guru would skip over a period abounding in interests of various kinds, and bring his account to a close by referring to an incidont with which he had no direct concern.

3 Maculiffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 1, f.n. 1.

extended we cannot say as the Sikh records give us no assistance in the matter. On the other hand, they indicate a gap in the public activities of the Guru from after the close of these incidents till the convening of the assembly at Keshgarh in 1699. At least for the latter part of this period of obscurity the Guru passed his days in the salubrious climate of the Naina Devi and was engaged in literary pursuits.[1] We are not told anything about the length of the Guru's stay in the hills but it appears that he could not have been very long in retirement because his letter, written to the ancestors of the Phulkian Chiefs, in which he invites them to aid him with their horsemen is dated *Samvat* 1753 os 1696 A. D.[2] We are quite in the dark as to what the Guru's difficulties at the time were and why he required this assistance. The Guru, however, does not tell us clearly whether the four successors of Mirza Beg came together or one after another, and if they had really come one after another it may not be improbable that the Guru's anxiety to keep himself in a state preparedness even in 1696 was due to the activities of one of these in the hill close to Anandpur.

This finishes our chronological survey of the pre-Khalsa period of Guru Gobind Singh's career. We have not said here anything with regard to the period preceding the battle of Bhangani because the main points have alredy been discussed in connection with the Guru' adventures. It will be seen that though it has been possible to evolve some sort of a workable scheme, based, more or less, on secure foundations, some uncertainties have remained and one or two gaps have been

1 It has already been stated that the *Ram Avatar* was finished here in 1698 and we think that the *Bachitra Natak* was also composed near about the same time. (See my article in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, September 1925).

2 The original letter, according to Bhai Khan Singh, is preserved in Ala Singh's *Burj* at Patiala and a copy at Nabha. The text is given in *Mahan Kosh*, Vol. III, p. 1773. It is addressed to Tiloka and Rama. The Guru says that he was much pleased with them and that their house was his house. The Guru then asks them to come to him with their horsemen and the request is repeated, more than once, in very urgent terms. A dress of honour was also sent with the letter. It is dated *Bhadon* 2, *Samvat* 1753 (August, 1696).

difficult to fill in. For instance, it has not been possible for us to say anything definite as to how long the Guru remained at Makhowal after his father's death and when he went to Paunta, though we have given our reasons for thinking that his earlier stay at Anandpur-Makhowal was rather short[1] and consequently he must have remained at Paunta for a much longer period than the Sikh records seem to indicate. And secondly, there is the gap which we have just discussed and which follows the close of the incidents narrated in the *Bachitra Natak*. Both these gaps are marked by a period of obscurity in the hills and we would repeat our belief that in later Sikh tradition the two were mixed up and became the foundation of the myth that two Guru passed the first twenty years of his pontificate in seclusion in the hills.

We shall now pass on to the post-Khalsa period, which is a much short one and where incidents follow one another in rather a quick succession. But still the chronology is, by no means, free from uncertainties. The only author, who might have been of sure assistance to us, is unfortunately silent with regard to most of the crucial points, and if we depend on the later Sikh records, we are often led to inconsistent positions and are sometimes set at variance with the more correctly ascertained dates of contemporary Muhammadan history. For instance, Kartar Singh, who has apparently relied on the Sikh records, places the battle of Chamkaur early in 1705 and, at the same time, says that the Guru uttered his blessing on the Malwa land in 1704, while he was at Damdama.[2] Again, both he and Macauliffe say that the Guru reached Nander in August, 1707 and stayed there for a year and two or three months.[3] But we know from the Muhammadan sources that in August 1707 the Guru was still at Agra. Moreover, both Kartar Singh and

1 Saina Pat only vaguely says that some years were passed at Makhowal before the Guru went to Paunta (*Gur Sobha*, ii, 8).

2 Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

3 Kartar Singh. *ibid.*, p. 247. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 236. We do not understand why J. N. Sarkar, who ought to have known better, says the same thing.

Macauliffe are agreed that the Guru accompanied Bahadur Shah in his expedition to Rajputana and later passed on, in his train, to the Deccan. Now, we know from the Muhammadan sources that after finishing his campaign Bahadur Shah crossed the Narmada to the Deccan on the 17th of May, 1708[1], and marched on towards the south in order to deal with the rebellion of Kam Baksh. He crossed the Banganga on 13th of August, 1708[2], and it was on the 5th of November of the same year that he pitched his camp at Zafarabad Bidar, 67 miles north of Haidarabad.[3] The Guru, therefore, must have stayed for a very short time at Nander, his death having occurred on the 18th October, 1708.[4] Thus it is clear that the Sikh records can hardly be relied on, and as for the major part of the story we do not get any assistance from other sources, all conclusions must be regarded as tentative.

The post-Khalsa career of Guru Gobind Singh may conveniently be divided into several periods. First, we have the Guru's hostilities with the Hill chiefs and the Mughal authorities ending in the evacuation of Anandpur ; secondly, the period of wanderings that began with the battle of Chamkaur and ended with the battle of Khidrana or Muktsar ; thirdly, the Guru's stay at Damdama ; and lastly, his start for the south and his wanderings and exploits in the company of Bahadur Shah. Now, we are told that hostilities commenced in 1700[5] and the Guru finally left Anandpur towards the close of 1704.[6] We are further told that the first phase of the struggle ending in the Guru's return to Anandpur after his temporary retirement to Basali was probably closed by 1702.[7] But the account given in the *Guru Sobha* does not warrant the allocation of a long period of these years to the first phase of the quarrel with the Hill

1 Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 50.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 59.
3 *Ibid.*
4 *Ibid.*, p. 90.
5 Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
6 *Ibid.*, p. 179, *Gur Bilas*, xxi, 14.
7 Kartar Singh, *ibid.*, p. 152.

chiefs. Saina Pat, who was very probably living at Anandpur at the time, speaks of a period of peace lasting for little more than two years but the later records, as we have seen, fill this up by several stray battles near Anandpur and elsewhere. If we take the *Gur Sobha* as our guide, as we must, it seems clear that the later chroniclers have mixed up the first phase of the quarrel with the period of peace and assigned to the first a duration which in reality belongs to the two together. The renewal of hostilities must therefore be placed towards the beginning of 1703 and the phase that now commenced could, by no means, have lasted for more than a year. It thus appears that the battle of Chamkaur should be placed towards the beginning of 1704 and not at the begining of 1705.

The period following the battle of Chamkaur is the darkest in the Guru's life. The emissaries of Wazir Khan were now searching for him in every direction and he was wandering as a fugitive from place to place, sometimes in one guise and sometimes in another, till at last, after the battle of Muktsar, he got a breathing time and passed some days in comparative peace at Damdama. He left Damdama for the south and he had proceeded some distance when he came to hear the news of Aurangzib's death, which took place on 3rd of March, 1707.[1] Thus his wanderings as a fugtive and his stay at Damdama together comprised some three years, roughly from the earlier part of 1704 to the end of 1706. Now, the *Gur Bilas* states that the Guru halted at Damdama for nine months and nine days.[2] This gives Damdama a period which appears to us too short and leaves to the Guru's wanderings a duration which again is apparently too long. There is, however, another tradition which says that the Guru halted at Damdama for a period of three years, minus some months and days.[3] It appears to us that the second tradition is perhaps nearer to the truth of the matter. The Guru's stay at Damdama was marked by great

1 Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 1.
2 *Gur Bilas*, xxiii, 166.
3 *Lakhi Book*, Sardar Attar Singh's translation, No. 59.

literary activity on his part. A new recension of the *Granth Sahib* was compiled, wherein were now added the compositions of Guru Tegh Bahadur and a *slok* of his own and it is also certain that a part, at least, of his own works was composed here.[1] On the other hand, "secure in his new retreat (at Damdama) Govind re-established his court, and surrounded himself with all the pomp and circumstances of royalty. Damdama became the centre of Sikhism, and a place of resort for learned men from all parts of the country. Numberless new recruits joined the ranks of the Khalsa and the position of Govind Singh became stronger than ever before." All these could not certainly have been achieved in the bare space of nine months and it seems that on this point at least the later tradition cannot be far off the mark.

As we have seen, it was from Damdama that the Guru started for the south and he appears to have retraced his steps when he heard the news of Aurangzib's death. Thereafter he must have joined Bahadur Shah at some point soon after the battle of Jajau, which was fought on the 18th of June, 1707. Henceforth the Guru's movements are bound up with those of Bahadur Shah and the more definitely ascertained chronology of Mughal history comes to rescue.

1 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 223.

APPENDIX C

Bachitra Natak

[The main historical interest of the *Bachitra Natak*, which may be regarded as an autobiography of Guru Gobind Singh, is concentrated in seven sections, *viz.*, the seventh to the thirteenth. Macauliffe gives us an English translation of the first seven chapters of the work[1] as well as of the last, but these important sections are omitted, the author giving it as his reason that as all the details narrated there had been incorporated in the general biography of the Guru, no separate translation seemed necessary. Unfortunately, from Macauliffe's account of the life of the Guru, it is not possible to determine which portions of it are based on the *Bachitra Natak* and where the other Sikh records are laid under contribution. In spite of its limitations, the *Bachtira Natak* is undoubtedly the most important of all the records about Guru Gobind Singh and it is essential that we should know what it has got to tell us independently. An English version of these sections of the *Bachitra Natak* is, therefore, a desideratum. The Guru's descriptions, however, are animated and sometimes full of repetitions. We have, therefore, omitted some of these but on the whole, we believe that nothing has been left out which can be of any use to the student of political history.]

1 The third section, is, however, skipped over but on the other hand we are given an English translation of the first three verses of the eighth section another extract from which is incorporated in Macauliffe's account of the battle of Bhangani. Malcolm also incorporates another extract from this section in his *Sketch of the Sikhs*. These we have used freely and we take this opportunity of acknowledging our indebtedness to their authors. I also take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Prof. Teja Singh who also helped me substantially in preparing this translation. I may add here that for the purpose of this translation I have used the printed text published by Gulab Singh and Sons and the annotated edition of Bhai Bishan Singh Gyani.

I. Section VIII.

The Battle of Bhangani.

When I obtained sovereignty I conducted religious affairs to the best of my ability. I hunted various sorts of game in the forest and killed bears, nilgaus and elks.

Afterwards I left home and went to the place called Paunta. I enjoyed myself on the banks of the Kalindri and saw amusements of various kinds.

There I hunted and killed many lions, nilgaus and bears. Fateh Shah, the king, became angry and came to blows with me without any reason.

There Sri Shah raged and the five stately heroes took their position firmly on the field of batttle—the tenacious Jit Mal and the desperate hero Gulab, whose graceful figures on the battle-field were wondrous to behold, —the determined Maheri Chand and Gangaram, who defeated and shattered the enemy's forces. Lalchand raged becoming red with anger and his bra very cast into shade even the pride of the peerless lion.

Maheru raged with a fearful expression and killed the brave Khans in battle. The most godly Dayaram rushed into the fray with great anger and fought bravely and skilfully like Drona of old.

Kripal advanced with a mace in his hand and smashed the head of the fierce Hayat Khan.

* * *

Then Nand Chand rushed into the fray with dreadful ire, wielding his spear and brandishing his sword. His keen sword broke but he drew out his dagger and with great determination saved the honour of the Sodhi race.

Then uncle Kripal advanced in his rage and exhibited the war feats of a true Kshatriya. The mighty hero was himself struck by an arrow but nevertheless made a valiant Khan fall from his saddle.

This brave Saheb Chand entered into the fray and slew a

bloody Khan. The stately hero wrought havoc in the enemy's ranks and those that survived fled with their lives.

There Sri Shah exhibited feats of valour and trampled under foot many bloodthirsty Khans. (On the other side) Raja Gopal stood erect on the field and looked like a lion amdist a herd of deer.

There raged the great hero Hari Chand who skilfully took his position in the field. In great anger he discharged sharp arrows and those whom he struck he sent to the other world.

* * *

Then Jit Mal aimed with his spear and struck Hari Chand down to the ground.

* * *

The bloody Khans drew out their Khorasan swords, the keen edges of which flashed like fire. The bows twanged, sending out swarms of arrows. The spirited horses fell under the heavy blows.

How far shall I decribe the mighty battle! Those who fought (in the front) were killed and thousands fled.

The Hill chiefs spurred their horses and fled; the soldiers retired with their arrows undischarged. The Rajas of Jaswal and Dadhwal, who had been fighting with zeal, now left the field with all their forces.

The Raja of Chandel became exhausted and preplexed, when the tenacious Hari Chand rose with a spear in hand. He became immediately alive to the duties of a leader and raged furiously. Those who opposed him were cut to pieces and fell.

Then Najabet Khan entered and directed his weapons against Shah Sangram. Several well-equipped Khans joined in the attack and sent Shah Sangram to the other world.

After having killed Najabat Khan Shah Sangram fell fighting. There were lamentations in this world but rejoicings in heaven.

When this insignificant creature saw Shah Sangram fall in battle he took his up bow and arrows. With the first arrow

I struck a Khan.....who fell to the ground. I then drew out another and aimed at the face of Bhikhan Khan. The bloody Khan fled leaving his horse, whom the third arrow struck and killed.

After waking up from his swoon Hari Chand directed his shots with unerring aim and then those whom he struck fell senseless and died.

* * *

In his anger Hari Chand drew out his arrows. His first arrow struck my horse. He aimed another at me but God saved me, the arrow only grazing my ear in its flight.

His third arrow penetrated the buckle of my waist-belt and reached my body, but wounded me not. It is only God who protected me, knowing me his servant.

When I felt the touch of the arrow, my wrath was kindled. I took up my bow and began to discharge arrows in abundance.

* * *

I killed Hari Chand and the enemies were trampled under foot. (Even) the millionaire chief was seized by death.

The hillmen fled from the field of battle, all fears vanished and I, through the favour of the eternal God, gained the victory.

Having thus held the battle-field, we raised aloud the song of triumph. I showered wealth on my arrows and they all rejoiced.

When I returned after the victory I did not remain at Paunta. I went to Kahlur and there established the village of Anandpur.

Those who had kept themselves away from the battle, I drove ont of the place ; and I patronised those who had distinguished themselves there.

Many days passed in this way and I fostered the faithful and rooted out all the wicked.

* * *

II. Section IX.

The battle of Nadaun.

Many days passad in this way till Miyan Khan of Jammu came and sent Alif Khan to Nadaun. Immediately quarrel broke out with Bhim Chand.

The Raja called me to assist him in the war and I joined his side. The enemy had erected a wooden fort there on a mound and brought the chiefs under control by means of guns and arrows.

There came Raj Singh and the powerful Bhim Chand, the vigorous and manly Ram Singh and the brave Sukhdev of Jassrot, and they managed everything with zeal and enthusiasm.

There came also the determined Prithi Chand of Dadhwar, fully prepared and after having made arrangements for the government of his realm. Kripal Chand arrived with ammunitions and drove back and killed many of the brave men (of Bhim Chand).

When second time the forces (of Bhim Chand) advanced, they were beaten back downward to his great chagrin. Those standing above were rejoicing and sounding bugles ; the Raja standing below was greatly annoyed.

Then Bhim Chand himself raged, uttering the *mantra* of Hanuman in his mouth. He called all the horses and myself too. All assembled and advanced in order.

All the great heroes entered into the fray in great anger and advanced, just as a flame advances over a fence of dry weeds (burning it in its train). On the other side, the valiant Raja Dayal of Bijharwal advanced with Raja Kripal, together with all his forces.

* * *

Then Kripal raged, standing erect on the field of battle with great determination. He discharged arrows in abundance and killed many heroes.

* * *

He made a great fight and the row was heard throughout the nine quarters of the world. His weapons wrought havoc (in the enemy's ranks) and he exhibited the true virtues of a Rajput.

Then the allies, in great anger, warmed up their battle and rushing forward hemmed in the troops of Katoch.

The people of the tribes of Nanglu and Panglu advanced in order together with the forces of *Jaswar and Guler*. The great hero Dayal also joined and saved the honour of the people of Bijharwal.

Then this insignificant creature (the Guru) took up his gun and aimed at one of the Rajas. The Raja reeled and fell upon the ground, so unerringly was the shot directed, but even then the angry chief thundered.

I then threw off the gun and took up arrows in my hand. I drew out four and discharged all of them. Then again I took three others and discharged them with my left hand (though) whether they struck anybody or not I do not know.

Then the Almighty God hastened the end of the fight and enemy were driven out into the river.

* * *

Alaf Khan fled and all the other heroes retreated precipitately, I remained there on the bank of the river for eight days and visited the palaces of the various Rajas.

Then I took leave of the Rajas and returned home and they proceeded higher up to settle terms of peace. The two parties came to terms aud therefore the story ends.

I came back here after having plundered Alsun (on my way) and, having reached Anandpur, enjoyed myself in various ways.

III. Section X.

The expedition of the Khanzada.

Many years passed in this way and all the thieves (the dis-

affected) were hunted out and killed. Some left the city but came back in utter destitution.

Then Dilawar Khan sent his son against me. When the night had advanced a few hours the Khans assembled and prepared for attack.

When the party reached the bank of the river, Alam came and woke me up. There was a great row; everybody stirred up and took up their weapons with fiery zeal.

Immediately volleys of shots were discharged. The heroes shouted in various ways and the noise was heard even on the other side of the river.

Drums beat, bugles blew, the soldiers thundered, horses danced, the guns roared and all mingled in one huge uproar,

The river wore a dreadful appearance and the soldiers (of the enemy) were cramped with cold. On top of this my heroes thundered and the bloody Khans fled with their weapons unused.

* * *

On their way they plundered the village of Barwa and established themselves at Bhallan. Through the favour of God, the wretched fools could not even touch me and fled.

IV. Section XI.

The expedition of Hussain Khan.

The Khanzada fled to his father but, being ashamed of his own cowardly conduct, he could not utter a single word. There Hussain thundered, striking his arms in pride and, with all his brave companions, prepared for attack.

Emboldened by the strength of his army Hussain advanced. First he plundered the houses (of the hillmen). Then he defeated the Raja of Dadhwal, brought him completely under control and made slaves of the princes.

Next, Hussain thoroughly looted the Dun, nobody being able to withstand the barbarian. He took away food grains by force and distributed them among his own followers. The big fool thus committed a very dirty act.

Some days passed and Hussain went on with his depredations. Now the turn of meeting the Raja of Guler came.

If they had not met for two days more the enemy chief would have come (upon me, but) destiny had thrown the apple of discord amidst them.

The Raja of Guler came to meet (Hussain) and with him came Ram Singh too. When four quarters of the day had passed they arrived and met Hussain, the slave, who felt extremely flattered and became blind in his vanity.

Just as sand becomes heated by the heat of the sun but the wretched thing does not know the sun and becomes proud of itself.

Similarly, the slave (Hussain), in his vanity, did not even condescend to notice them. With the Rajas of Katoch and Kahlur at his side, he thought that he was peerless in this world.

They (Gopal and Ram Singh) offered Hussain the money they had brought with them. In this matter of giving and taking some differences arose and they returned to their own place with the money.

At this the slave became very angry and lost all sense of good or bad. He did not pause to consider the ways and means but at once ordered the beating of the drum for advance.

He threw all tactical considerations to the winds. The hare surrounded the lion for the purpose of overawing him He kept them invested for 15 *pahars* (about 45 hours) and did not allow either food or drink to pass.

The soldiers became indignant at the want of food and drink and Gopal sent a messenger for the purpose of making peace. Beholding his valiant Pathan soldiers around bim, the slave lost his balance and did not agree to the proposal.

"Either give me ten thousand rupees immediately or take death upon your head," (he said) : I (the Guru) had sent Sangatia there and he brought Gopal (to the enemy's camp), giving him assurance (for his safety).

The two sides could not agree and then Kripal thus thought within himself—"such an opportunity will never come again ; time, in its circle, deceives every body."

"Gopal must immediately be taken hold of—either he must be made a prisoner or be killed." When Gopal got scent of these intrigues, he, the king of heroes, escaped to his own men.

When Gopal was gone, Kripal raged in his fury. Himmat and Hussain (joined) and rushed into the fray.

* * *

Then raged the Raja of Kangra and Katoch, his face and eyes red in anger, and his mind free from all other considerations. From another quarter the Khans entered, arrows in hand, and it seemed that leopards were roaming in quest of flesh.

* * *

There had been fighting a hero named Hari Singh, who received, in his body, many arrows from the enemy. In great anger he killed many of the soldiers and, after exhibiting a great fight, went to the other world.

Himmat advanced with a sword in hand. Jalal Khan joined with a mace. The determined heroes fought, intoxicated as it were. Blows followed blows and weapons crowded upon one another.

The Raja of Jaswal rushed forward on horseback and surrounding Hussain struck his lance at him.

* * *

Then Hussain himself entered into the thick of the fight All took up bows and arrows. The fierce Khans, with faces and eyes red with indignation, commenced a great fight.

The fight was most terrible; the armies were exhausted. Hussain still stood there like a hero. The forces of Jaswal fell on him. His horsemen were cut down like shreds of cloth.

But Hussain still stood there alone, like the staff of battle-flag rooted in the ground. Whoever was struck with an arrow from his bow was pierced through.

Then all those who were struck with his arrows came together and fell on him. From all sides arose the cry, 'kill, kill'.

They wielded their weapons with great effect and at last Hussain Khan fell and went to the other world.

* * *

(When they saw Hussain Khan fall) the soldiers of Katoch advanced in their rage, together with the indignant Himmat. Hari Singh also came forward at that time and killed many valiant horsemen, especially selecting them for the purpose.

Then the Raja of Katoch raged, carefully selecting his position in the field. He wielded his weapons with unerring aim, thundering death (upon his opponents).

(From the other side) raged the Raja of Chandel and he attacked indignantly in a body. Those who had entered into the fray were killed and those (who had remained behind) flew with their lives.

Sangat Rai died with his seven companions. On the death of Kripal in the battle Gopal rejoiced. When the leaders fell the soldiers all fled in disorder.

* * *

In this way the enemies were all killed and they began to take care of their own dead. There they found the wounded Himmat and Ram Singh spoke thus to Gopal—

"That Himmat, who has been the root of all these quarrels, has now fallen wounded in our hands." When Gopal heard this he killed Himmat and did not allow the latter to get up alive.

Victory came and the battle ended. The soldiers remembered their homes and proceeded thither. The Lord saved me (from unnecessary warfare) by making the cloud of battle rain elsewhere.

V. Section XII.

The expedition of Jujhar Singh.

In this manner fight continued *endlessly* and the leader of the Muhammdans was killed. Dilawar became very angry and sent another army (in this direction).

From his side came Jujhar Singh, who immediately drove out the enemy from Bhallan. On this side Gaj Singh mobilised his troops and fell upon him early in the morning.

There Jujhar Singh stood erect like a flag-post planted on the field of battle. Even the post might waver but the brave Rajput did not flinch.....

The soldiers of both parties moved in detachments, the Raja of Chandel on that side and on this side, the Raja of Jaswar. They were all fired with indignation and the fight commenced.

* * *

The battle continued with great vigour on both sides. Chandan Rai was killed when Jujhar Singh alone continued the fight. He was soon surrounded from all sides.

Without any hesitation he rushed into the enemy's ranks, wielded his weapons with great dexterity, killed many of the valiant soldiers and at last himself went to the other world.

VI. Section XIII.

The arrival of the Shahzada.

In this manner Jujhar met his death and the soldiers returned to their homes. Then Aurangzib became very angry and sent his son to the Punjab.

At his approach all were frightened and fled to the hills. Me also the people tried to frighten as they did not understand the ways of the Almighty.

Some left me and took shelter where the big hills stood. The cowards did not know where their safety lay. Then the son of Aurangzib became very angry and sent a subordinate in this direction, who pulled down the habitations of those who had left me.

The successors of both Baba Nanak and Babar were created by God Himself. Recognize the former as a spiritual and the latter as a temporal king.

Babar's successors shall seize and plunder those who deliver not the Guru's money.

The name of the officer who destroyed the homes of the apostates was Mirza Beg. The Guru himself saved all those who remained true to him.

There Aurangzib's son's anger knew no bounds and he sent four other officers. These plundered the houses of all those apostates who had escaped Mirza Beg Khan.

APPENDIX D

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The works, mentioned already in the Bibliography appended to Vol. I and which have a bearing on the period covered by this volume as well, have been omitted.

I. *Gurumukhi*

Dasam Pādshāh Kā Granth or the Book of the Tenth Guru.

There are two different versions of a Sikh tradition about composition of the *Granth* by Guru Gobind Singh. The story runs that after his accession to the *gaddi* of his father, the Guru sent for the *Granth Sahib* of Guru Arjan, which was in the hands of Dhir Mal at Kiratpur. As is well known, Dhir Mal was no friend of Guru Tegh Bahadur and he is said to have retorted that, if Guru Gobind Singh was the real Guru and if the light of Guru Nanak was in him, it was quite within his power to produce another such *Granth*. The Guru accepted the challenge, but here the tradition splits and we have two versions of what followed. Some say that the Guru accordingly composed the *Dasam Pādshāh Kā Granth* (T. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 216 ; Court, *op. cit.*, p 43), while others assert that it was this refusal of Dhir Mal to hand over the *Granth Sahib* of Guru Arjan that led him to dictate the whole of the *Granth* to Bhai Mani Singh during his residence at Damdama (*Panth Prakas*, p. 255 ; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V. p. 223 ; *Itihas Guru Khalsa*, p. 338).

Cunningham seems to have accepted the first version, for he says that at Damdama the Guru occupied himself in composing the supplemental *Granth*, or the Book of the Tenth King, to rouse the energies and sustain the hopes of the faithful (*op. cit.*, p. 80). But this cannot be wholly true. The Dasam Granth is a huge, unwieldy medley of heterogeneous matter and there is clear internal evidence that different parts of it were written by different writers at different times. The Guru is said to have kept fifty-two bards in his employ, the names of some of whom are given in the *Panth Prakas* (p. 164, f. n). Together with these the Guru had commenced translations and abridged vesions of

the more important of the Hindu mythological works, and from a few references here and there, it appears that much of it had been completed even before 1699 (*Panth Prakas*, p. 164 ; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p 67 ; Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 99). This, however, does not rule out the possiblity that a part of it might have been written at Damdama. Narang says that the Guru compiled the *Dasam Granth* at Damdama (*op. cit.*, 166) but we know from the Sikh records that the compilation by Bhai Mani Singh took place twenty-six years after the Guru's death (Macauliffe, *op. cit*,, Vol. V. p. 223, f. n.).

Narang says : "The collection does not do credit to the Guru's name and much of it, except the Guru's own compositions, might well have been omitted. The book does not command much respect among cultured Sikhs who look upon most of the contents as spurious." (*op. cit.*, p. 364). This may be quite true but still the importance of the *Bachitra Natak* has already been clearly emphasised and the usefulness of the Guru's other writings, particularly with regard to his views on sundry matters, can, by no means be underrated. The prefatory remarks to some of the translations done by the Guru himself and the dates of their composition given at the end throw light on disputed points, and some of the other works, which are to be attributed to the bards in the Guru's employ, are not wholly useless, as "they serve as an excellent index to the part played in Guru Gobind Singh's life and activities by Hindu theology, mythology, philosophy, history and literature." On the other hand a large part of the work consisting of portions like the *Stri Charitra* are useless to us whatever their value to the student of literature might be.

A table of contents of the work is given by Narang (*op. cit.*, Appendix I, pp. 365-367) and T. Banerjee (*op. cit.*, Chapter xvii).

Gur Sobha by Saina Pat.

Next to the Guru' own compositions it is the most important of the sources on Guru Gobind Singh. Saina Pat, the author, was one of the bards in the Guru's employ and was thus one of his closest associates. He appears to have been an eye-witness of some of the incidents that he narrates and describes others on the basis

of what he had heard from reliable persons (viii, 7). It is practically the only contemporary narrative so far as the post-Khalsa period of the Guru's carrer is concerned and thus its importance is self-evident. Saina Pat says that he began the work in Bhadar, Sambat 1758, which is equivalent to August-September, 1701. (*Gur Sobha*, i. 6). Some, however, read the word "*athavan*" (fifty-eight) as "*athanav*" (ninety-eight) and say that the work was finished in 1741. We, however, prefer the earlier date because we can think of no reason why Saina Pat, who was a poet and a man of literary attainments, would defer the writing of the work to a time when he must have grown a very old man. But at any rate, the fact remains that this is the only chronicle that has been left by a close associate of the Guru and therefore must be given a foremost place among the sources on Guru Gobind Singh's life and career.

Gur Bilas (Life of the Sixth Guru).

The name of the author is not known. It is, however, stated in the preface that he had heard the story from one Dharm Singh, who was present at Nankana at the time when Bhai Mani Singh recited it. Mani Singh, in his turn, had gathered the story from Bhai Daya Singh, who again had heard it from Guru Gobind Singh. The work is said to have been completed in 1718 A. D. Macauliffe, however, says that in the opinion of Kahn Singh, "the work was compiled by Bhai Gurmukh Singh and Bhai Darbara Singh, a priest and a chorister respectively of the Sikh temple at Amritsar, and that they began their literary labour in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and finished it in the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh." Whatever the truth about its origin might be, the work is overloaded with legends and myths and is not of much use for purposes of history.

Gur Bilas (Life of the Tenth Guru) by Bhai Sukha Singh.

Bhai Sukha Singh was an inhabitant of Anandpur and an expounder of the *Granth* at Keshgarh, where Guru Gobind Singh had introduced the new method of initiation by *pahul*. He was thus very intimately associated with the tract where the most important part of the Guru's career was played. He completed his work in 1797. In the meanwhile many legends must

have grown about Guru Gobind Singh and some of these are, no doubt, incorporated in Sukha Singh's account. Nevertheless, it is the earliest and the best of all the later records and, used with discrimination, can yet be made to yield some results.

II. *Persian*

Of the sources under this head some are Sikh and some non-Sikh. Of the former the following are the most important :—

(1) The "*Zafarnama*" or Persian epistle of Aurangzib, believed to have been written by Guru Gobind Singh at Dina, where he halted for some time, in between Chamkaur and Khidrana. We think, however, that it embodies a later and modified version, and its authenticity, it seems to us, is not entirely free from doubt.

(2) "*Zindagi Nama*" and other Persian poems by Bhai Nand Lal, apparently the same person who is said to have been the intermediary between the Guru and Bahadur Shah. These are not of much importance so far as the actual events of the Guru's career are concerned, but "his works show what a deep reverence the Guru's personality could inspire in those who saw him and elucidate many of the principles of Sikh religion."

Of the latter group several works have been mentioned in the text as well as in the footnotes. Unfortunately the contemporary Muhammadan chronicles are mostly silent with regard to the events of Sikh history. We come across only stray references here and there, and these also are very few and far between. They, no doubt, help us in checking the traditional records on a few points and also, to some extent, with regard to chronology. But the sum-total is so meagre that these can hardly be regarded as sources, properly so called. This should serve as an eye-opener to those who would not touch the Sikh chronicles even with a pair of tongs. Apart from the fact that without a study of Sikh literature a true perspective of Sikh history can never be obtained, these advocates of Muslim chronicles should remember that there can be no cut and dried method in historical studies. There are, no doubt, certain broad principles

which have got to be adhered to at all events, but the method must vary from time to time and from subject to subject, according to the nature of the materials available for each. If these people are waiting for something to crop up, they may have to wait till Doomsday.

III *English*

Later Mughals, Vol. I, by William Irvine.

The account of the Sikhs during the Guru period is scrappy and weak with respect to the Sikh sources. But it is invaluable because of the few references that it gives from the contempoprary Persian chronicles.

Life of Guru Gobind Singh by Kartar Singh.

The writer is more concerned in removing what he considers as slurs on the memory of the Guru than in giving a correct account of the Guru's life.

Sikhism—its Ideals and Institutions, by Teja Singh.

A very good and useful work.

The following also have been found useful, one way or other :—

Punjab Castes by Denzil Ibbetson.

Pujab Customary Law by Tupper.

Simla Hill States Gazetteer.

APPENDIX E

GLOSSARY

(Words with diacritical marks)

Asā dī Var
Bachitra Nātak
Bandī Chhor Bābā
Banswārā
Beimān
Bhaddanis
Bhagautī-kī-wār
Charanpāhul
Chhakānā
Darbār
Devī
Dhirmaliās
Dhuān
Fakir
Faujdār
Gitā
Granth Sāhib
Grās daiye bās nā daiye
Gurdwāra
Holī
Itihās Guru Khālsā
Japjī (of Guru Nanak)
Jāpjī (of Guru Gobind Singh)
Jāts
Jai Jagmāt
Jogī
Kanghā
Karā
Karmnāsh
Karor rāyan
Kātic sudī panchamī
Khālsā
Khānzādā
Kripān
Kritnāsh
Kulnāsh
Kurīmārs
Manjā
Minās
Panch Piyāre
Parsād
Patāshās
Paurī
Rām Rāyees
Sachchā Pādshāh
Sālagrām
Sākhī
Shāhzādā
Subāhdār
Sultān
Uch kā Pir
Vār (or) Wār
Wāhguru ji kā Khālsā
Wāhguru ji kā Fateh

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